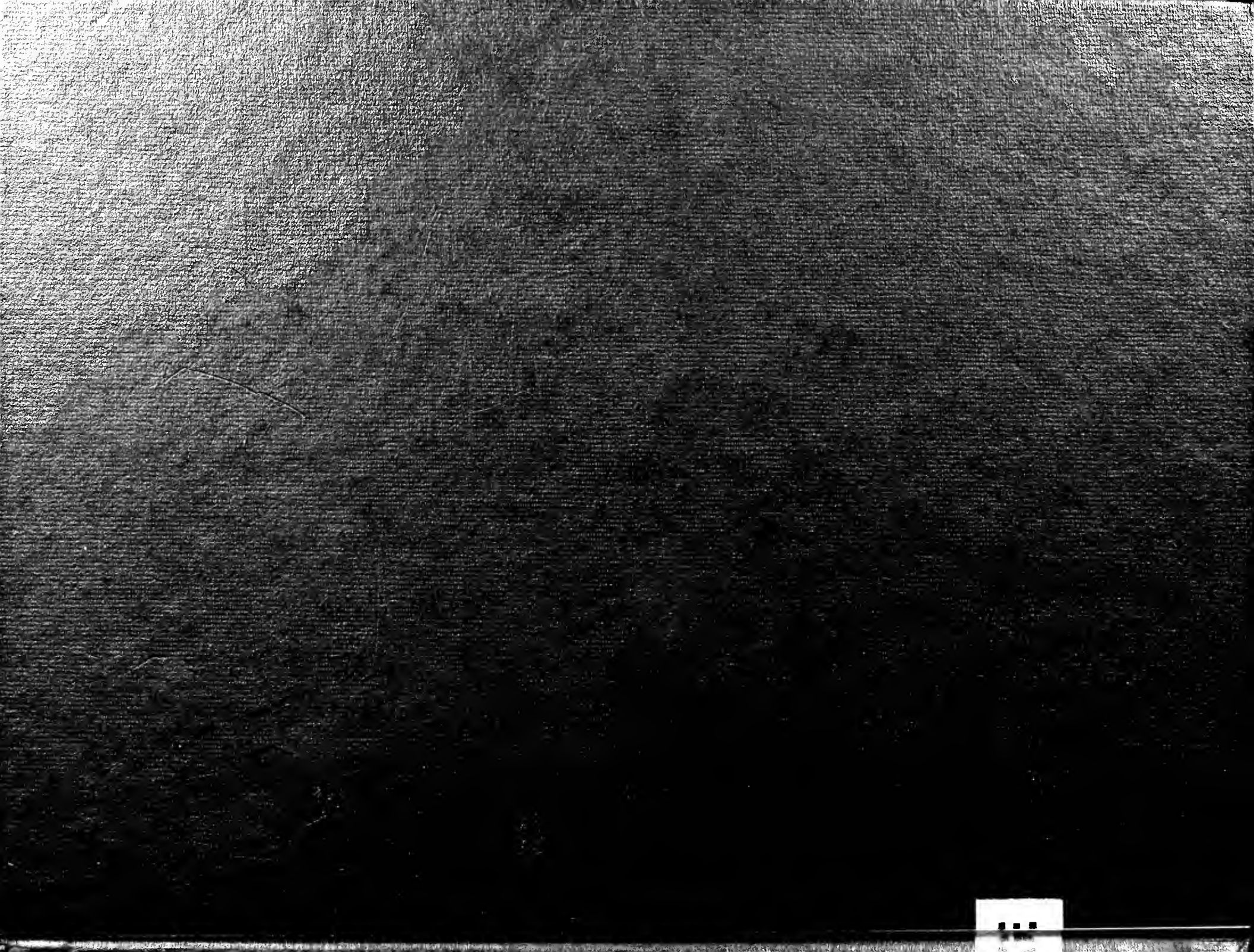


UNIVERSITY of
PENNSYLVANIA
LIBRARIES

ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

DOCUMENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF INTERIOR FINISHES

Dorothy Stewart Krotzer

A THESIS

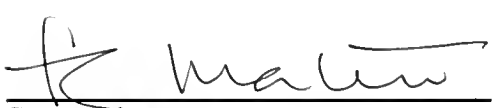
In

Historic Preservation

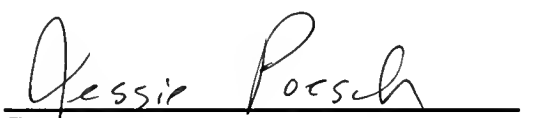
Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

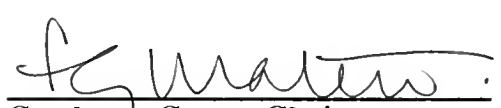
2001



Supervisor
Frank G. Matero
Associate Professor of Architecture
University of Pennsylvania



Reader
Jessie Poesch
Professor Emeritus of Art History
Tulane University



Graduate Group Chair
Frank G. Matero
Associate Professor of Architecture
University of Pennsylvania

UNIVERSITY
OF
PENNSYLVANIA

Fifty years hence may the old church stand as to-day, a monument to the piety and labors of its priests and people, and knit by even stronger ties. May generations yet unborn gather within its walls...

Souvenir Golden Jubilee Consecration
of St. Alphonsus Church. New Orleans, La. 1858-1908

Table of Contents

Title Page i

Epigraph ii

Table of Contents iii

1.0 Abstract 1

2.0 History of St Alphonsus Church 2

2.1 Cultural History 2

2.2 Architectural History 4

3.0 The Present Church of St. Alphonsus 27

3.1 Exterior Description 27

3.2 Interior Description 29

4.0 Interior Decorative Finishes: Examination and Analysis 32

4.1 Methodology of Finishes Investigation 32

4.1.1 Archival Research 32

4.1.2 *In situ* Examination 34

4.1.3 Finishes Characterization - Methodology 36

4.2 Overview of Interior Finishes History 37

4.3 Chronological Description of Interior Finishes 39

4.3.1 Period I Surface Treatments (1857 - 1866) 39

4.3.2 Period II Surface Treatments (1866 - ca. 1920) 67

4.3.3 Period III Surface Treatments (ca. 1920 - 1955) 98

4.3.4 Period IV Surface Treatments (1955 - present) 122

4.4 Chemical Analysis of Selected Finishes 126

4.4.1 Pigment Analysis 128

4.4.2 Media Analysis 133

5.0 Interior Decorative Program: Conclusions and Recommendations **141**

Appendices

Appendix A. Floorplans and Interior Elevations of St. Alphonsus Church 146

Appendix B. Finishes History Schema 151

Appendix C. Key to Sample Locations 156

Appendix D. Finishes Analyses Data 162

Appendix E. Representative Paint Sample Stratigraphies 166

Bibliography **182**

Index **184**

1.0 Abstract

This research addresses the examination and analysis of the interior decorative finishes of St. Alphonsus Church in New Orleans. A survey and thorough documentation of the remaining finishes has been performed in order to establish the church's original and subsequent interior decorative schemes. Through historical research and physical investigation, the various campaigns of surface treatments has been identified and interpreted to provide a coherent, chronological history and description of this building's interior.

The study consists of a brief historical overview of the design and construction of the Church of St. Alphonsus and a review of the interior finishes that were discovered during the investigation. Particular emphasis is placed on the earliest decorative campaigns of the building. In addition, recommendations are made with regard to the interpretation of the existing finishes. It is the hope of the author that this study will serve as a fundamental planning document for the present and future preservation of St. Alphonsus.

2.0 History of St. Alphonsus Church

2.1 Cultural History

In New Orleans, there survives the last vestige of what was once heralded as the "ecclesiastical corner" of the city. This niche of the neighborhood known as the Irish Channel, in the stretch of Constance Street between Josephine and Jackson Avenue, was once the site of several Catholic churches and related structures, all of which served the rather large local Catholic community. The church of St. Alphonsus, along with the church of St. Mary's Assumption, exist today as reminders of this former hub of the city's Catholic religion and various ethnic groups including the Irish, German and French. Although its cornerstone was laid in June of 1855, the origins of St. Alphonsus extend many years before.

St. Alphonsus was established by the Redemptorist Fathers, an originally Italian order with predominantly German and Austrian members founded in 1732.[1] The Redemptorists came to New Orleans from Baltimore in the mid-1840s to aid a growing Catholic immigrant population.[2] This population consisted mainly of Germans and Irish, who had fled the potato famines in Ireland. These immigrants, together with a pre-existing French population, settled predominantly in the riverfront area known then as the City of Lafayette which was located upriver from New Orleans. The existence of this ethnically diverse community created a need for not just one, but three separate Catholic churches—each serving a different portion of the population and each holding sermons in their unique language. Thus, three separate parishes were created within the single Redemptorist community.

For the local German population, a small frame church named St. Mary's Assumption was erected in 1844. Shortly thereafter, in 1850, a temporary church for English-speaking,

---

[1] Roger G. Kennedy. *American Churches*. New York: Stewart, Tabori and Chang, 1982, p. 152.
[2] Samuel Wilson, Jr. *The Church of St. Alphonsus*. New Orleans: The Friends of St. Alphonsus, 1996, p. 2. [Note: Both the cultural and physical history portions of this study are drawn predominantly from this work. Unless otherwise cited, the information in these sections can be found in Wilson's work.]

or Irish Catholics was constructed. This small church, "a plain unassuming edifice, built of rough boards,"[3] was the original St. Alphonsus. Within a few years, the congregation had grown quite large and it was clear that a new, larger structure was needed. On December 12, 1853, a plot of land on Live Oak (Constance) Street between Josephine and St. Andrew Streets was bought by the Redemptorists as the site for the new St. Alphonsus church.

St. Alphonsus was built and maintained over the years by its loyal congregation, which continued to grow and reached its height during the economic depression of the 1930s. However, a shift in the Irish Catholic population from this riverfront neighborhood to the suburbs in the 1950s had a profound effect on St. Alphonsus and eventually led to its closure and present state of deterioration.

[3] *Redemptorist Brothers' Annals.* Archives of the Redemptorist Brothers at the Redemptorist Vice-Province House. New Orleans, LA. April 1, 1850.

2.2 Architectural History

The Redemptorists commissioned Baltimore architect Louis L. Long to build their new church in New Orleans. Louis Long and his brother, Robert Cary Long, had been commissioned by various denominations to build churches throughout Baltimore. Robert had previously worked with the Redemptorists on the design of Baltimore's St. Alphonsus Church in 1842 while his brother designed St. Ignatius for the Jesuits in 1856. (Figures 1 and 2) St. Ignatius, with its pedimented facade, Ionic pilasters and heavy cornice, is a modest Classical Revival building whose exterior shows no sign of its rich Baroque interior. In comparison, Robert Long's St. Alphonsus Church in Baltimore, designed with the aid of one of the Redemptorist brothers, was much more severe. Its spired tower, pointed-arch windows, ribbed ceiling and ornate interior filled with *trompe l'oeil* painting combine to make it a good example of the Gothic Revival in this country.[4] Although the Redemptorists preferred the German Gothic style for their church, Long utilized several elements of the English Gothic or Perpendicular . As a result, Baltimore's St. Alphonsus is a combination of the two architectural styles.[5] In New Orleans, the German and Austrian order again commissioned a Long brother to design an appropriately stylish church that would employ German architectural motifs. Louis Long designed for them a church classical in origin with German undertones, St. Alphonsus. (Figure 3)

---

[4] John Dorsey and James D. Dilts. *A Guide to Baltimore Architecture*. Cambridge, MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1973, p. 41-2.
[5] Kennedy, 152.

Fig. 1. St. Ignatius Church. Baltimore, Maryland. (Photograph from Wilson, *The Church of St. Alphonsus*, p.4)

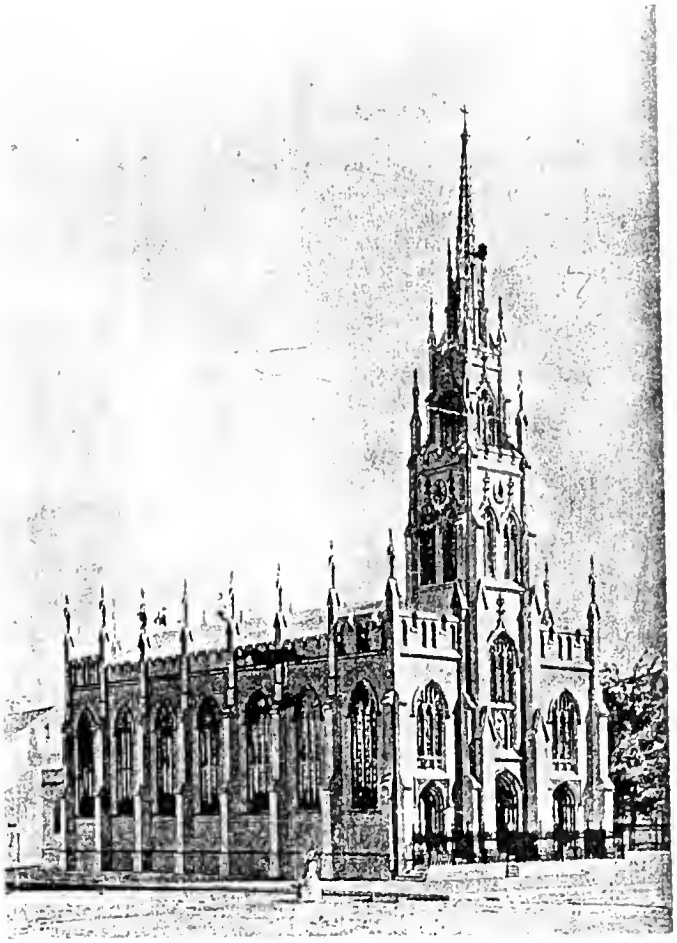


Fig. 2. St. Alphonsus Church. Baltimore, Maryland. (Photograph from Dorsey, *A Guide to Baltimore Architecture*, p. xxii)

Fig. 3. St. Alphonsus Church. New Orleans, Louisiana. (Photograph by Robert S. Brantley and Jan White Brantley)

As can be seen in Louis Long's original drawings for the New Orleans St. Alphonsus, the church exists today essentially as it was designed in 1856, with the exception of the two spired clock towers which were never built. (Figure 4) The design for St. Alphonsus, and especially its interior, resembles his Baltimore commission, St. Ignatius. Although St. Ignatius is noticeably smaller than St. Alphonsus and lacks its apse and two exterior towers, there are several similarities between the two buildings' interiors. (Figures 5 and 6) Both churches contain coved ceilings divided into panels, framing elaborate plaster work at St. Ignatius and figural painting at St. Alphonsus. There is a single, figural painting in the center of the ceiling of the Baltimore church as opposed to the series of paintings which adorn the ceiling of St. Alphonsus. The nave walls of both are perforated by tall, circular-head stained glass windows, separated by colossal pilasters or engaged columns with Corinthian capitals. In an early photograph of St. Ignatius' interior, pilasters and decorative painting can be seen on the nave walls and in the altar area. However, it has only a choir loft and lacks the balcony and galleries dominant in the designs of St. Alphonsus. Similarly, the interiors of both churches have been altered over time and their current finishes are quite different from their original, elaborate decorative schemes.

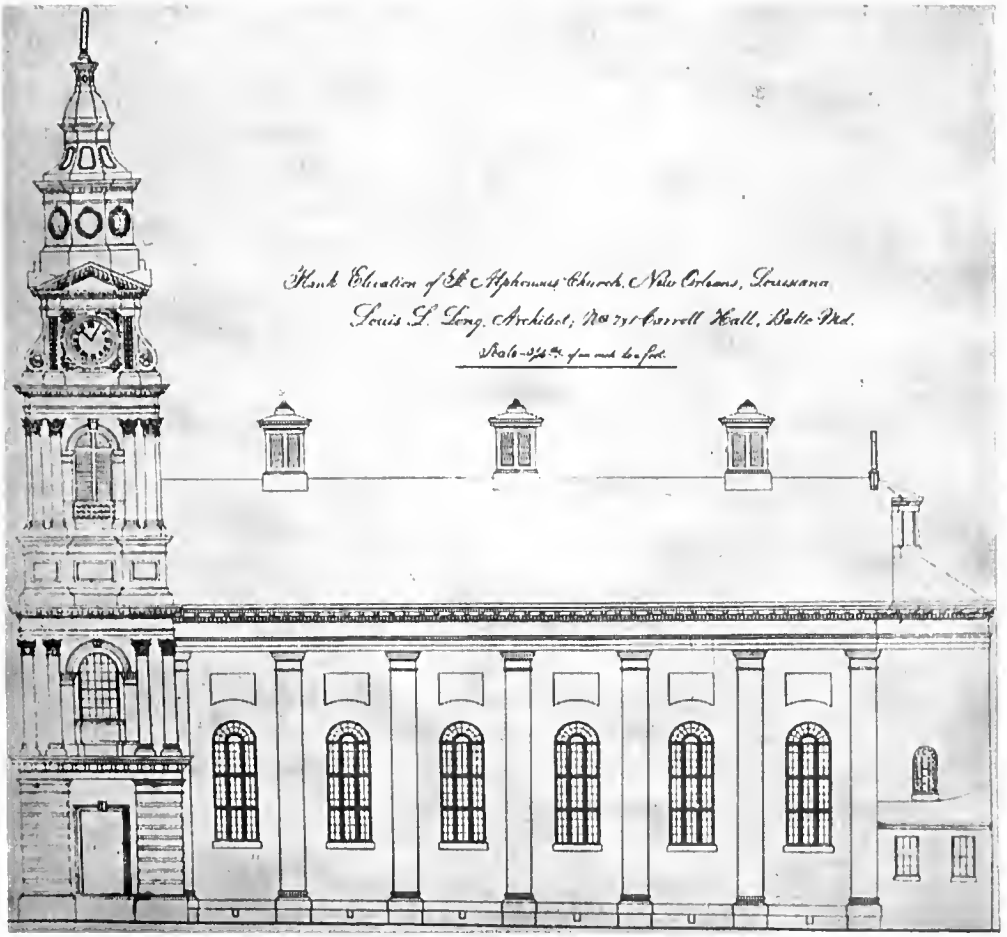


Fig. 4. St. Alphonsus Church. New Orleans, Louisiana. Side elevation, drawing by Louis L.Long. (Photograph from Wilson, *The Church of St. Alphonsus*, p.6)

Fig. 5. St. Ignatius Church. Baltimore, Maryland. Interior. Historical photograph, date unknown. (Photograph from Wilson, *The Church of St. Alphonsus*, p.5)

Fig. 6. St. Alphonsus Church. New Orleans, Louisiana. Interior. (Photograph by Robert S. Brantley and Jan White Brantley)

The construction of St. Alphonsus and its continual program of maintenance is outlined in several historical accounts and documents. The actual construction of St. Alphonsus was supervised by Brother Thomas Luette, who arrived in New Orleans from Baltimore in 1852. The digging of the foundations for the new St. Alphonsus began on April 17, 1855.[6] It took over two years to complete the church but during and after its construction it was proclaimed a great achievement and an architectural wonder.[7] Upon seeing the beginning stages of its erection, contemporary architect Thomas K. Wharton commented in his diary on July 26, 1855 that the church of St. Alphonsus was already

> one of the largest and finest churches in the city--best lake brick--cement mortar--iron bases to pilaster--Piers projecting nine inches from main walls--workmanship very superior and the design, so far, solid massive and finely proportioned.[8]

Although the structure itself was completed in April of 1858, when it was officially consecrated, some elements such as the walls and ceiling were left unfinished, awaiting the time when additional funding was available.[9] With the onset of the Civil War shortly thereafter, New Orleans became an occupied city and the work at St. Alphonsus was interrupted. After the war, however, the church renewed its interest in finishing the building that had been built over ten years before. Of primary importance to the clergy and the parishioners was the completion of the interior, which must have been left plain and undecorated for a number of years during the war. In October of 1865, the pastor asked his congregation "to contribute towards the frescoing of St. Alphonsus Church."[10] His request was well received and the embellishment of the church's interior began soon after.

---

[6] *Redemptorist Brothers' Annals*. April 17, 1855.
[7] Wilson, 7.
[8] Ibid.
[9] *Redemptorist Brothers' Annals*. April 25, 1858.
[10] *Redemptorist Brothers' Annals*. October 22, 1865.

The following year, an account in September 9 edition of *The New Orleans Times* stated that three Italian artists, "Canova, Rossi, and Perachi, are now engaged in frescoing the ceiling."[11] (Figures 7 and 8) The writer then described the paintings in their embryonic state:

> Wide and spacious galleries are pinned to the gilded columns within, galleries that may seat over a thousand souls...Over the altar is emblasoned in the inscription "Ecce Panis Angelorum," from which falls the ever-during lamp, the light that never goes out. In a panel immediately in rear of the altar on the ceiling is a fresco of the Holy Family, St. Joseph, the Virgin and Child. In panels on each side are fresco paintings of the Four Evangelists, St. John, St. Luke, St. Matthew and St. Mark. Figures fashioned after the pattern of the Munich School, a kind of paper maiche, adorn niche and cavity, and the whole bears the impress of master hands that framed the panels in all the gorgeousness of the Roman guild.
>
> Three large panels [on the ceiling] are filled with figures. The first is a fresco of the Ascension, the grouping of the figures, and the figure of Our Lord, being modeled after the Grand Masters, if we mistake not, that fresco in the Sistine Chapel at Rome. The second fresco, the centre panel of the ceiling, represents the apotheosis of St. Alphonsus. The third panel is now being fitted, and represents the Assumption. The Madonna, though not of an original type, is of a beautiful figure—the eyes are raised in the holiness of a pure devotion, the lips are parted in prayer, the gentle tone of each rounded line, each soft lineament of form and of feature is well executed, if not with genius, in a workmanlike manner and artistic grace that does the artist credit...The figure [of the Madonna], as represented in fresco, fills out the idea, and the inspiration of Michael Angelo[sic] lives in the Madonna figure and each angelic group. Panels open for medallion figures on the side and extend around on either side of the bended ceiling. In these are to be placed medallions of the saints and apostles. The panels are well grained in stucco work, as are the frescoes in the arch of the ceiling, the figures over the altar and all other within the interior. It is when the panels are all filled with their figures and when the fresco work will be completed that the Church of St. Alphonsus will be a temple worthy of the service to which it is dedicated.[12]

This article contains the first reference found that describes the decorative treatment of the interior. It should be noted that the author's use of the term "fresco" in reference to the paintings at St. Alphonsus is probably a misnomer and follows the late nineteenth century tradition of describing any decorative wall painting as 'fresco'. These paintings are technically not true or *buon fresco*, meaning painting on wet, freshly prepared lime plaster with

---

[11] *The New Orleans Times*. September 9, 1866, p. 6.
[12] Ibid.

Fig. 7. St. Alphonsus Church. New Orleans, Louisiana. Central panel of ceiling paintings. (Photograph by Robert S. Brantley and Jan White Brantley)

Fig. 8. St. Alphonsus Church. New Orleans, Louisiana. Ceiling paintings in apse. (Photograph by Robert S. Brantley and Jan White Brantley)

Fig. 9. St. Alphonsus Church. New Orleans, Louisiana. Altar area. (Photograph by Robert S. Brantley and Jan White Brantley)

pigments ground in water only. Instead, the paintings appear to have been executed on previously applied, cured plaster.[13]

A subsequent article, dated November 30, 1866, announced the completion of the paintings at a cost of over $15,000.00.[14] Interestingly, in the latter account all of the credit is given to the artist Canova and none to the previously mentioned Rossi and Perachi (who some historians believe to have been another artist by the name Achille Perelli).[15] Unfortunately, no additional information on either of the secondary artists was found in this study. However, information is available on Dominique Canova, who is thought to be related to the Italian sculptor, Antonio Canova. Dominique Canova, one of the best known nineteenth century artists who operated in New Orleans, was active in the city between 1839 and 1868.[16] However, very little of his work still remains in and around New Orleans. His group of ceiling paintings at St. Alphonsus, whether executed alone or with other artists, represent the most elaborate and intact to survive.

The embellishment of the interior of St. Alphonsus continued with the addition of new altars in 1868. (Figure 9) The altars were designed by a Chicago artist referred to only as "Mr. Buscher."[17] The altars are richly carved wood with a series of Corinthian columns and niches filled with statuary. The main altar has a raised, curved pediment topped by a cross and an Italian painting of St. Alphonsus, received by the church in 1872, installed under the pediment. Although "there was some little dissatisfaction among the Congregation that they

---

[13] Although the ceiling paintings and their application technique were not extensively researched in this study, it is the belief of the author that the ceiling paintings were executed on cured plaster (what is known as *fresco secco*). Research conducted showed the design layers to be a separate surficial layer, not bound in the uppermost area of plaster. In addition, examples of true fresco are believed to be rare in the wet climate of New Orleans.

[14] *The New Orleans Times.* November 30, 1866, p. 7.

[15] Wilson, 15.

[16] Joan G. Caldwell. "Italianate Domestic Architecture in New Orleans. 1850-1880, Volume One." Ph.D diss., Tulane University, 1975, p. 211.

[17] *Redemptorist Brothers' Annals.* February 16, 1868.

were not made in this City," the new altars were "the admiration of all."[18] In 1874, a painting of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, executed in Rome, was also installed.

An early lithograph, dating from between 1872 and 1888, depicts the interior of St. Alphonsus at this point in time—after the Buscher altars were installed and its decorative scheme was complete. (Figure 10) This lithograph, made by the Philadelphia-based firm Packard and Butler, clearly illustrates the early furnishings and decorative treatment of the church during this period. Although the focus of the lithograph is the main altar, the entire front half of the church is portrayed—its rich cornice, carved wooden balcony, and original pews, pulpit, and baptismal font are all visible and remain in the church today. The original ceiling paintings are also depicted as are a series of what appear to be decorative, architectural elements on the walls of the nave, apse and transept.

From the lithograph, the walls appear to be decorated with pilasters or paneling, brackets and, in the apse, panels of polished stone. The polished stone panels, which resemble a vein-inclusive stone such as marble, flank the main altar while the more simplistic pilasters adorn the walls of the nave. To confirm the existence of these architectural elements, the apse and nave walls were physically inspected. However, the examination of these areas did not reveal any evidence of architectural elements. Instead, the investigation uncovered fragments of paintings executed in three-dimensional *trompe l'oeil* in imitation of the various decorative elements. Paintings of elongated, vertical panels or pilasters adorn the nave walls while brackets and additional painted panels appear on the transept walls above the side altars. The apse wall appropriately contains the most ornate decorative treatment, with several paintings executed to imitate panels of polished marble. This elaborate, *trompe l'oeil* painting was most likely executed while the interior was being "frescoed" by Italian artists (as the 1866 *New Orleans Time* article states), or perhaps even earlier. All of these painted, decorative

---

[18] Ibid.

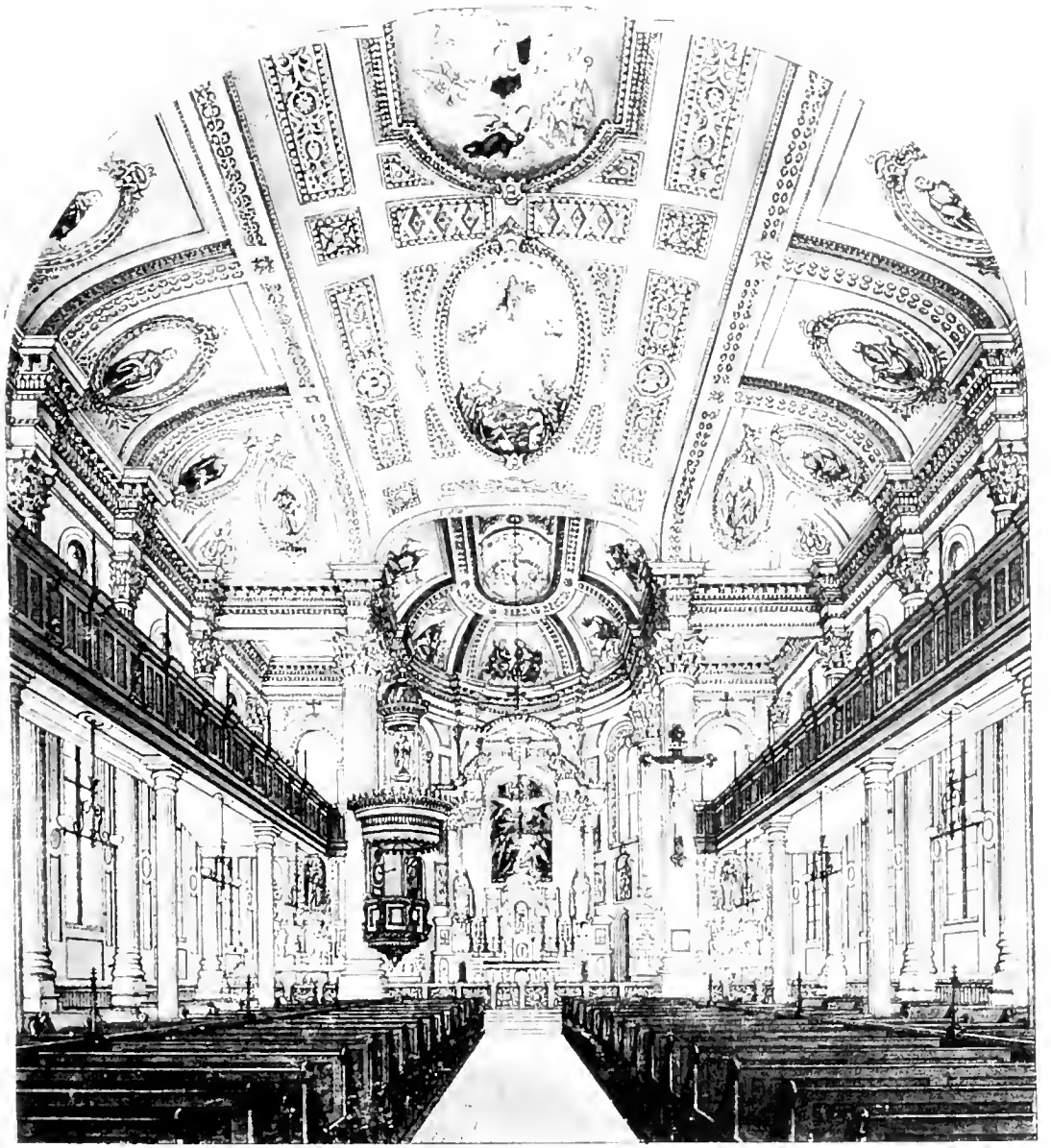


Fig. 10. St. Alphonsus Church. New Orleans, Louisiana. Interior ca. 1872-1888. Lithograph by Packard and Butler, Philadelphia. (Reprinted from The Historic New Orleans Collection, Museum/Research Center, Acc. No. 1960.75)

elements are visible in the lithograph and remnants of them still exist under years of later paint. Investigation of the ornamental painting is discussed in further detail in Section 4.3.2.

The ceiling represented in the lithograph is very similar to the ceiling which exists today. The figural paintings and plaster work remain the same, only the border designs have been altered. The lithograph illustrates, on the nave and apse portions of the ceiling, figural paintings surrounded by elaborate borders which appear to be cast plaster work. However, further physical investigation revealed that only some of the decorative panels are actually cast plaster. The woven, guilloche-pattern ceiling ribs, which separate the main portion of the ceiling from the coved area, are plaster. The other decorative work on the ceiling must have been painted in *trompe l'oeil* to resemble intricate cast plaster work, much like the details painted on the walls. The painted borders on the ceiling, however, were more skillfully executed and echo the design motifs of the plaster work in the church. Overall, the interior of St. Alphonsus at this time was rich and ornate, with every portion of its walls and ceilings embellished with imitated, ornate relief work.

In 1883, the building was in need of maintenance, as it was thought that "many things were going to decay."[19] According to architect and historian Sam Wilson, "the interior and exterior of St. Alphonsus Church was re-painted...The painting was done by Mr. Rauch and was finished in a few weeks."[20] The altars were also touched up a few months later, again by Rauch. Although no period source was cited by Wilson, Rauch's interior work must have been fairly limited. Photographs from 1897 and ca. 1900 reveal an interior almost identical to that of the early lithograph, indicating that Rauch's painting must have been restricted to the touching up of pre-existing plain and decorative painting. (Figures 11 and 12)

---

[19] Wilson, 30.
[20] Ibid.

Fig. 11. St. Alphonsus Church. New Orleans, Louisiana Interior in 1897. (Photograph courtesy of The Friends Of St. Alphonsus)

Fig. 12. St. Alphonsus Church New Orleans, Louisiana. Interior photograph taken by E. Claudel, New Orleans, ca. 1888-1908. (Photograph courtesy of The Friends of St. Alphonsus)

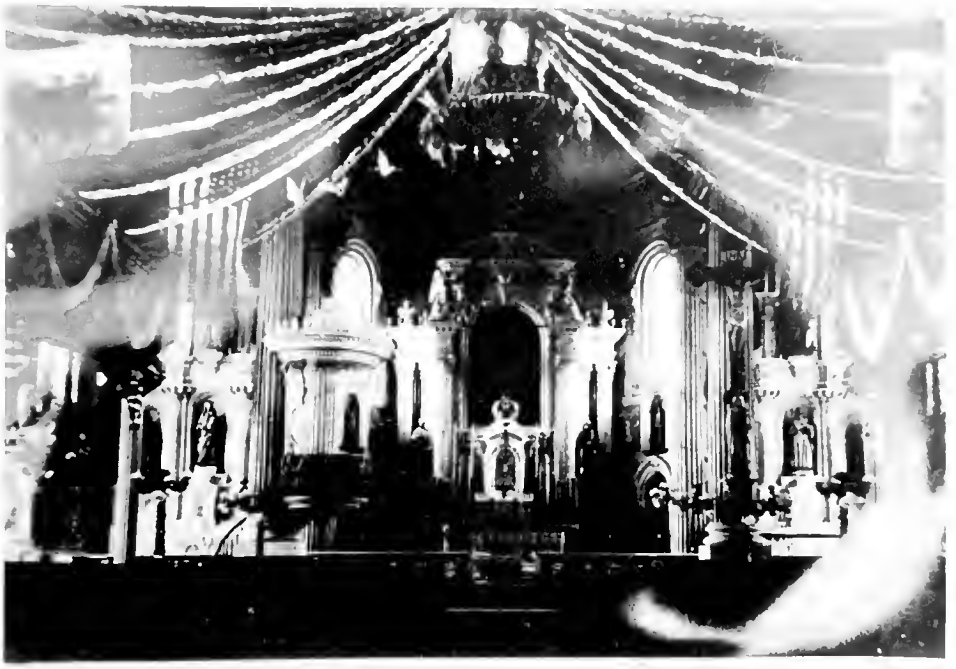


Fig. 13. St. Alphonsus Church. New Orleans, Louisiana. Interior in 1908, during a fiftieth year anniversary celebration of the church's consecration. (Photograph courtesy of Friends of St. Alphonsus)

Additions were continually made to the interior of St. Alphonsus after that date. In 1884, six statues of various saints, ordered from Munich, were installed in the side altars.[21] One of the most significant alterations to the church's interior occurred in 1889-1890 when the series of stained glass windows was installed. The glass was made in Munich and shipped to New Orleans over the course of a year. In order to accommodate the new windows, one bay of the gallery and balcony closest to the altar was removed. Justification for the removal of this eight-foot length of the gallery was that it would result in "a better show of the side altars and of the windows."[22] The two round-headed windows in the upper wall of the apse, flanking the altar, were the first to be installed in February of 1889. The nave windows, which were all memorial gifts, were installed in November of 1890 and still exist today. According to B.J. Krieger's *Seventy-five Years of Service*, the church was also "newly frescoed" at this time. This "re-frescoing" most likely refers to the repair and selective re-painting of areas affected by the partial removal of the gallery, but may also indicate another campaign of decorative painting.[23] Although no physical evidence of this was found, it is possible that the *trompe l'oeil* paintings on the walls and ceiling were painted over in the same manner as their original application, to revitalize the then twenty-year-old paintings.

The remaining history of alterations and additions to St. Alphonsus is less detailed and comes mainly from expenditure reports for the church. In 1891, additional statues of Our Lady and of St. Joseph were received and installed in niches on the facade of the church. It is also believed that the entrance porch on the building's facade was added around this time. Electric lights replaced the old gas light system in 1892 and this system was again rewired in 1911.[24]

---

[21] *Redemptorist Brothers' Annals*. March 14, 1884.
[22] *Redemptorist Brothers' Annals*. November, 1888.
[23] B.J. Krieger. *Seventy-five Years of Service*. New Orleans: Redemptorist Fathers, 1923, p. 59.
[24] Archives of the New Orleans Archdiocese. File entitled *St. Alphonsus Annual Report: Expenditures,*

Around the turn of the nineteenth century, two altars were made for St. Alphonsus by a New Orleans artisan named Bendernagel.[25] These altars were received by the church no later than 1908, when they first appear in photographs. (Figure 13) These Bendernagel pieces, the St. Gerard altar and the altar of the Sacred Heart, imitate both the main and the side altars designed by Buscher. They were installed on the nave walls of the sanctuary facing the congregation, where they remain today.

According to the financial statements in the *St. Alphonsus Annual Report: Expenditures, Improvements on Church (1875-1904)*, the ceiling of the church was repainted for $600.00 in 1908.[26] This "repainting" most likely refers to either the borders around the figural paintings or the touching up of the figural paintings. The small quantity paid for the work, $600.00, also supports the theory that only a minimal amount of work was done. However, there are no known images of the church's interior showing the ceiling at this time, making it difficult to compare the ceiling's painted designs before and after this date. It is important to mention that lack of accessibility to the ceiling prevented in depth research into the ceiling finishes. The ceiling will be discussed in this study only as one part of the overall decorative scheme of the church.

The tiling of the aisles and vestibules occurred in 1911-12 as did the installation of gas steam radiators. The financial report also states paying $2,873.98 for "church painting, etc...Pieta, Sacristy, painting altars" in 1913. This painting campaign appears to have been limited to the sacristy, altars and some statuary. The report also shows several years in which large sums of money were spent on the improvement of St. Alphonsus, although exactly what the money went towards is unfortunately not specified. For instance, between the years 1924-1926, unprecedented amounts of money were allotted for "Improv'ion on Church

---

Improvements on Church (1875-1904). Year 1911.

[25] Larmann, Sheila. Conversation with author, 14 January, 1997.

Property," as is stated next to the year 1924. In 1924, approximately $49,000.00 was spent on the building; in 1925, $45,000.00; and in 1926, $14,000.00. A large sum of money, totaling almost $145,00.00, was also spent in 1929-1930.[27] The latter period, however, was when the elaborate Our Lady of Perpetual Help Shrine was built and the large expenditure most likely reflects this.

In 1925, St. Alphonsus was declared the parish church while St. Mary's Assumption and Notre Dame de Bon Secours (the church for the French-speaking Catholics in the parish which was demolished shortly afterwards) were made "chapels of ease". Attendance at St. Alphonsus slowly increased, reaching its height after the stock market crash in 1929 and during the subsequent Great Depression. During this time, novenas held to Our Lady of Perpetual Help attracted thousands of people each week to St. Alphonsus. Because of the popularity of this icon, an elaborate shrine was built and dedicated to Our Lady in one of the side altars in 1929-30, as previously mentioned.

The centennial year of the laying of the cornerstone of St. Alphonsus, 1955, marks the last period of significant change for the interior of St. Alphonsus. At this time, the church was extensively redecorated and the aging 1910-11 electrical fixtures were replaced with new fixtures. According to the *History of the Redemptorist Vice Province of New Orleans*, the sanctuary was also enlarged, probably by moving the communion rail from the top to the bottom of the steps leading into the sanctuary. In addition, the Our Lady of Perpetual Help shrine was tiled with gold mosaics, the aisles of the church were newly tiled, and carpet was laid down in the sanctuary.[28] It was also at this time that a small fire occurred in the church causing minor damage to some of its furnishings.[29]

---

[26] *St. Alphonsus Annual Report: Expenditures, Improvements on Church (1875-1904).* Year 1908.
[27] Ibid, Years 1924-1926.
[28] Wilson, 38.
[29] *New Orleans Item.* April 19, 1955, p. 1.

Beginning in the 1950s, there was a good deal of change in the surrounding community which had a pronounced effect on the church of St. Alphonsus. Most significant was the shift that occurred in the population of the Irish Channel, as many of the Catholic families who had been there for generations moved to the suburbs. Attendance at St. Alphonsus dropped severely as did the number of Brothers in the Redemptorist Community. Then, in 1965, Hurricane Betsy hit New Orleans. St. Alphonsus received a small amount of damage, mainly to the roof of one of its towers, but was able to remain open for services.

In 1970, several rows of pews were removed to accommodate the installation of the old altar from the Church of Notre Dame de Bon Secours. This action may represent a final attempt to beautify St. Alphonsus and attract a congregation. A platform was constructed on the nave-side of the communion rail on which the altar was placed. By 1989, services at St. Alphonsus had been discontinued for a number of years and there were no plans for the rapidly deteriorating church. It was decided to auction off a portion of the church's furnishings and, on January 13, 1990, $46,000.00 was raised from the sale of some of its confessionals and various statues which had been mounted to the walls. It was at this point that the church was in its worst physical condition and in need of immediate attention.

Recognition of the significance of St. Alphonsus had been attained years before in 1973, when the church was placed on the National Register of Historic Places of the United States Department of the Interior. The Irish Channel neighborhood was also added to the National Register as an historic district in 1976. However, the building continued to deteriorate through a lack of maintenance and care and was even de-sanctified in the 1980s. In 1990, an organization known as *The Friends of St. Alphonsus* was formed in response to the poor condition of the church. This group of volunteers, dedicated to halting the deterioration and converting this former church into an art and cultural center, is currently in

charge of the building. It was through their efforts that the Church of St. Alphonsus was designated a National Historic Landmark in September of 1996.

3.0 The Present Church of St. Alphonsus

3.1 Exterior Description

The church of St. Alphonsus is an austere, brick masonry structure. In what has been described as "Renaissance Revival" and "*Rundbogenstil*", its symmetrical elevation boasts a variety of simple details Classical in origin. The repetition of round-headed windows recalls the German interpretation of Renaissance Revival, known as *Rundbogenstil* , which was popular in Europe during the first half of the nineteenth century.[30] *Rundbogen* means literally "round-arch" in German, denoting the defining element of this architectural style.[31] Also characteristic of this style are: rigidity of composition, repetition of specific elements, and a foundation rooted in Classical and Italianate architecture.[32] All of these features are embodied in Long's design for St. Alphonsus Church.

Architectural Historian R. Warren Robison supports the attribution of St. Alphonsus' design to the Renaissance Revival style, or *Rundbogenstil* , by describing the heavy, rich exterior decorated with pilasters, a dentiled cornice, and a series of semi-circular arches, as recalling Renaissance architecture.[33] He goes on to explain that St. Alphonsus is typical of Louisiana's Renaissance Revival architecture. In fact, he claims the building typifies American Renaissance Revival architecture as defined by

> symmetrical elevations crowned with bold cornices. But windows are always arched...there is a minimum of unbroken wall surface. The over-all effect is decidedly richer, with strong contrasts of light and shade. This may be due to sculptural ornament, to the use of superimposed orders...to paneling and layering of the wall surfaces, or to a combination of these factors.[34]

---

[30] Spiro Kostof. *A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 577.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Henry-Russell Hitchcock. Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Baltimore: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1968, p. 27.
[33] R. Warren Robison. *Louisiana Church Architecture.* Lafayette: University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1984, p. 24.
[34] Marcus Whiffen. *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles.* Revised Edition. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992, p. 79.

While the exterior of St. Alphonsus is not excessively ornate, it certainly embodies the characteristics of symmetry, "unbroken wall surface" and variety of Classical orders.

The church's facade is flanked by two square bell towers, originally intended to be clock towers topped by finials. The facade consists of three tiers: the ground level with a central arched doorway flanked by two smaller entrances which all provide access into the building; the second level with three circular-headed windows over each of the doors below and a series of pilasters (which once had cast iron, Corinthian capitals) that support the building's main entablature; and the upper level with its band of recessed brick panels on which the bell towers rest and a central niche with a rounded pediment and two pairs of pilasters on either side in which sits a statue of St. Patrick. The bell towers each have louvered circular-headed openings flanked by two pairs of pilasters. The side elevations have six circular-headed, stained glass windows interspersed with a series of large pilasters with cast iron bases and Doric capitals. These capitals support the building's entablature, which is continued from the front along each side and across the apse at the rear of the building.

3.2 Interior Description

St. Alphonsus, with its apse and nave flanked by galleries, is based on the basilican plan of church architecture. This plan combines a long nave and side aisles, which are separated by a series of columns, with a semi-circular apse where the altar is located. Another element typical of this type of plan is a narthex, stretched across the front of the church.[35] At St. Alphonsus, the narthex contains three exterior doors on its Constance Street side. It is through these doors that entry into the church is gained. At either end of the narthex is a wooden staircase which provides access to the balcony and choir loft. This wood-paneled choir loft extends around the three sides of the nave and is supported by fluted, cast iron columns. Its underside is clad with a pressed-metal ceiling which, judging from historical images of the church interior, was added sometime after 1872. In the center of the choir loft is an arched recess containing an organ case.

The main altar in the apse of the building is flanked by a pair of side altars, all of which are raised above the sanctuary by a series of marble steps. The main altar is free-standing, attached to the masonry wall by wood members at only a few points. This altar is not only flanked by two engaged, plaster columns but it also conceals all but the tops of two additional engaged columns which are located behind it. There are also two free-standing plaster columns located in the sanctuary, in front of the main altar. An ornately carved pulpit with a curved wooden stair is attached to the western column of this pair.

On each side of the main altar are side altars which resemble it. The altar to the west of the main altar, the St. Joseph altar, contains four circular-headed niches which contain statuary. The side altar to the east of the main altar was changed significantly in the 1930s to accommodate the Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help. It is presently a recessed niche decorated with gold mosaics. There are two doors on either side of the apse wall of the altar

---

[35] Robison, 12.

area which allow access into what were originally the sacristies but are presently an office and a museum. Each of these doorways has an elaborate, plaster surround whose elements relate to those found in the cornice and a reveal that matches the ribs of the coved ceiling.

The sanctuary is raised above the body of the church by one step at the communion rail and by three additional marble steps behind the free-standing columns. The communion rail, which extends across the nave, is made up of a series of panels in open relief work. The communion rail separates the sanctuary from the body of the church, which has a wide center aisle and two side aisles below each balcony. The present pews are original but are lacking the small doors which were initially mounted at the ends of each of the rows of pews.

The walls of the nave are perforated by German stained glass windows, each of which is flanked by very large engaged Corinthian columns and topped by a simple curved, plaster arch that ends in brackets. Atop the columns is a polychromed, elaborate Corinthian cornice. The coved ceiling is divided into panels containing figural paintings separated by plaster ribs decorated with plaster relief work.

The elaborate *trompe l'oeil* paintings visible in early images of the interior and discussed previously, no longer exist. But the figural ceiling paintings remain, representing some of the most important and intact decorative painting from this period to exist in New Orleans. Moving from the altar to the front door of the church, the figural paintings as they exist today depict: the Ascension of Christ, St. Alphonsus rising to Heaven, and the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. The side paintings surrounding these central ones, are medallion portraits of the twelve apostles with Christ and St. Paul. On the left-hand side of the church, moving from the altar to the main entrance, are: St. Thomas, St. Andrew, St. Peter, Jesus Christ as "Salvator Mundi" (Saviour of the World), St. Paul, St. John and St. James. On the right-hand side are: St. Matthias, St. Jude Thaddeus, St. Simon, St. Matthew,

St. Bartholomew, St. Philip and St. James.[36] These ceiling paintings are of particular significance to this study as they are the only existing component of the church's early decorative scheme.

[36] "Art Tour of St. Alphonsus Church." Friends of St. Alphonsus, New Orleans, 1996, p. 15.

4.0 Interior Decorative Finishes: Examination and Analysis

4.1 Methodology of Finishes Investigation

4.1.1 Archival Research

Research began with an attempt to place St. Alphonsus and its interior in an historical context. Literature on other Redemptorist and Catholic churches of the period, New Orleans ecclesiastical architecture, interiors, and decorative painting were all researched. In addition, all written and visual information concerning the construction, alteration and maintenance of the interior of St. Alphonsus was examined.

Both primary and secondary written sources, as well as all historical images of the interior of the building, were examined. Primary works included newspaper articles, contemporary guidebooks to New Orleans, St. Alphonsus' expenditure reports, the Redemptorist Brothers' *Annals*, period painters' guidebooks, and religious periodicals such as *The Ecclesiologist*. Secondary sources such as written histories of the Redemptorist Order and of the Church of St. Alphonsus itself (namely Samuel Wilson's *The Church of St. Alphonsus*) and material on decorative painting and architectural history were consulted to gain a knowledge of the social and physical history of St. Alphonsus. To locate the aforementioned sources, the following archives and libraries were examined: the Historic New Orleans Collection, the libraries at the University of Pennsylvania, the New Orleans Public Library, the Redemptorist Vice-Province House Archives, the Archives of the Archdiocese of New Orleans and Tulane University's Southeastern Architectural Archives, Louisiana Collection, and Manuscripts Department.

Images, chiefly photographs, were the most useful source in establishing a chronological history of the building's interior finishes. Unfortunately, most images found, excluding the early Packard and Butler lithograph, concentrate on the altar and sanctuary

area. The rest of the church, especially its front portion, is typically omitted from photographs, causing its finishes to be difficult to place in time. The images, coupled with written descriptions and documented alterations, provided enough information on the interior that a preliminary chronology of its finishes could be established. This rough chronology based on archival research served as a guide for the next phase of research, the *in situ* examination of the physical fabric.

4.1.2 *In situ* Examination

Using the historical images and the preliminary chronology as a guide, St. Alphonsus—the building—was examined. Initially, any evidence of the earlier finishes documented in the historical images was examined. To locate and assess the many strata of painted finishes, a variety of on-site investigative techniques were carried out. Surfaces were examined in raking light (an incandescent light source was held close to and parallel to the wall's surface, allowing the light to "rake" across the surface) to reveal any changes in surface due to decorative painting, previous paint campaigns or alterations. In addition, by mechanically removing overlying layers of paint or elements added to the church's interior, *in situ* exposures were made and a number of extant finishes became visible. Several layers of previous finishes were revealed and documented through photography. Small samples were taken so that the on site observations could be verified microscopically in the conservation laboratory. Photographs of the exposed layers as well as photomicrographs of the cross-sections of the samples are included throughout the text of this study. A key to the sample locations is located in Appendix C and representative sample stratigraphies in Appendix E.

During the investigation and in this report, only the main body of the church was examined. The sacristies, presently an office and a museum of the Church of St. Alphonsus, were not included. The portion of the interior investigated was divided into separate architectural elements, each of these elements historically being treated individually with its own, distinct decorative scheme. For the purpose of this study, the interior was divided in the following manner: altar area and sanctuary, nave walls, ceiling, nave windows, cornice, full and engaged plaster columns, cast iron columns, balcony/choir loft, main entryway, and stairwells and side entries. The overall history of the church's decorative finishes was divided onto periods or phases of decoration, each period containing a summary of the interior

finishes and a description of each element at the time of the particular campaign. Those areas not covered in the scope of this study include: the floor, the plaster ribs of the ceiling, the altars, the ceilings of the side altar areas, the pulpit, the confessionals, and all exterior doors. Also for this study, the altar area was designated as north, the Constance Street wall as south and each of the nave walls west and east.

4.1.3 Finishes Characterization - Methodology

To document and understand the various treatments of the interior throughout its long and complicated history, approximately 140 samples were examined in cross-section using reflected light microscopy. Samples were initially examined in normal reflected quartz-halogen light using a Nikon SMZU variable magnification stereo microscope (10x-75x). Representative samples were mounted in a commercial polyester/methacrylate resin (Bioplast™) polymerized with a methyl ethyl ketone peroxide catalyst and cured under a tungsten light. Embedded samples were sectioned on a Buehler Isomet™ micro-saw for microscopical examination. The sectioned samples were polished using an alumina powder (Buehler Micropolish II, 0.05 micron) on a felt cloth. Embedded sectioned samples were examined with a stereo-binocular microscope (Nikon Optiphot 2) in normal reflected light and pseudo darkfield using quartz-halogen illumination. Fluorescence microscopy was also employed in the analysis of selected finishes. Other analyses included Scanning Electron Microscopy and Energy Dispersion Spectroscopy (SEM-EDS). Sample preparation, microscopy, and chemical analyses were carried out in the Architectural Conservation Laboratory (ACL) and the Laboratory for Research on the Structure of Matter (LRSM) at the University of Pennsylvania.

4.2 Overview of Interior Finishes History

On site investigation and microscopic examination of the interior finishes of St. Alphonsus revealed four distinct periods of decoration. Each period is strikingly different from the other and each is indicative of the artistic and architectural styles of the time. (See Appendix B - Finishes History Schema) The first two decorative campaigns, about which the most is known, span a period of almost fifty years. Although the schemes of these two periods are very different, they share a similar color palette of warm, earthy tones. The first decorative campaign was the most simple and the most short-lived scheme the church interior had in its history. The decoration during this period, which extended from 1857 to 1866, was limited to tinted wall plaster. The ceiling paintings had not been executed at this time nor were the stained glass windows or present altar part of the interior. In 1866, however, all of this changed. Period newspapers document the work of Italian artisans, led by Dominique Canova, within the church. At this time, the entire interior of St. Alphonsus was embellished with figural paintings, elaborate *trompe l'oeil* paintings and metallic gold finishes. This period of St. Alphonsus' history is representative of the larger trend in architecture occurring throughout the United States in which architects and artists looked to Classical architecture for inspiration and interest in Italian architecture was being revived. This interior decorative treatment relates directly to the overall construction of St. Alphonsus, both are Italian Renaissance Revival.

The decorative work executed by the Italian immigrant artists was to remain the dominant decorative scheme of St. Alphonsus' interior for more than fifty years. In fact, it was not until well into the twentieth century that the interior finishes program was altered. When the interior was finally re-painted, sometime after 1908, the decoration was drastically different from any previous scheme. During this third period, the color palette and

decorative program became "Romanesqued". Dark, earthy colors dominated the interior in the form of stenciling and crude imitative painting. However, the figural paintings on the ceiling were not repainted during this period, but remained in striking contrast to the stenciling and as a reminder of the church's previous decorative campaign. The type of decoration used in this period is reminiscent of that seen throughout this country at the end of the nineteenth century, during a distinct period of Medieval Revival in architecture. The present, and final, finishes scheme for the church interior is a very simple scheme involving cool gray tones and minimal polychromy. This final decorative program, which was executed in 1955 by Conrad Schmitt Studios, returns to a more simplistic scheme in which the focus is on the artistry of the figural paintings executed a century prior.

4.3 Chronological Description of Interior Finishes

4.3.1 Period I Surface Treatments (1857 - 1866)

SUMMARY OF PERIOD I

The first decorative scheme of St. Alphonsus' interior was simple and short-lived. At this time, the majority of the wall and ceiling surfaces in the church were treated only as exposed plaster and not with an applied finish. The walls and the ceiling were covered with a two-coat lime plaster system consisting of a gray base coat and a rough finish coat. On the walls, this rough finish coat was integrally tinted a pinkish-tan color while the ceiling was left the off-white of the untinted plaster in anticipation of future embellishment. Plaster elements such as the Corinthian columns, the sacristy door surrounds and the cornice, were treated in a buff-colored finish interrupted occasionally by a gilded element. The windows, contained in circular-headed openings, were fixed and contained clear glass. The frames and sash of the windows were treated with a cream-colored paint, presumably oil-based.

ALTAR AREA AND SANCTUARY

The apse proved to be one of the most important areas in the church for the interpretation of the early wall treatments. In this area, all of the wall finishes pre-dating the present altar are preserved behind it. Until the 1868 installation of the Buscher altar, another altar sat in the apse of St. Alphonsus. In fact, the wooden nailers of the original altar are still embedded in the plaster wall behind the present altar. In this hidden area behind the 1868 altar, the earliest finish found was not a painted finish but a colored top coat of plaster. (See Figure 14) This slightly rough plaster is tinted a pinkish-tan or flesh color and is applied on top of a brown-gray base coat. There is no thin, white, lime-rich finish coat typically associated with interior plaster work. Instead, only this two-coat plaster system exists, with a pigmented top coat.

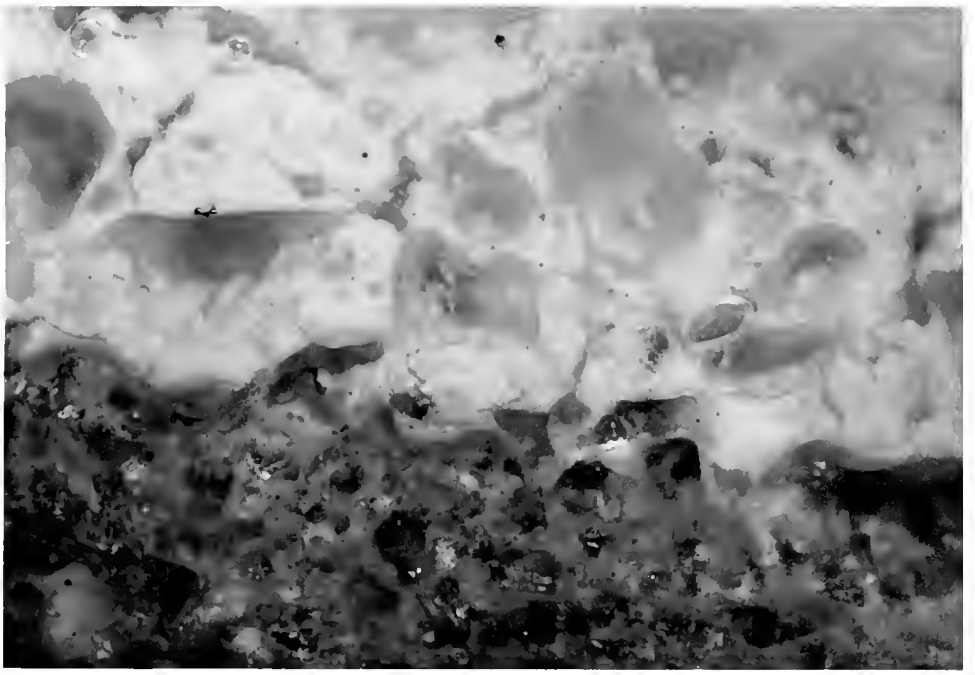


Fig. 14. St. Alphonsus Church. Photomicrograph of Sample #1N-10, removed from the apse wall, shows the plaster's gray base coat and tinted pinkish-tan finish coat. 10x magnification. (Photograph by author)

The discovery of this plaster finish suggests that during the first decade of the church's existence, the walls of the apse (and the rest of the church) were intentionally left undecorated and plain in the anticipation of further embellishment. The tinted plaster was most likely only temporary—a durable and aesthetically pleasing finish while the plaster cured and additional funds were raised for the next, permanent decorative campaign. In Louis Long's Baltimore church, St. Ignatius, the walls were also tinted for the first nineteen years of the church's existence. A period source states that prior to the addition of frescoes to St. Ignatius' interior in 1884, "the walls and ceilings had been tastefully tinted, the former a pale pistachio green, the latter a very light chocolate."[37] This "tinting" could refer to either a tinted plaster like that found at St. Alphonsus or to a tinted wash or paint. Whether or not both churches employed tinted plaster, it is certain that the interiors of both were initially treated in a temporary, monochromatic way in anticipation of future redecoration.

The technique of tinting plaster would have been accessible and cheap as well as aesthetically pleasing. There is a reference to the tinting of plaster in William Millar's work of 1897, *Plastering Plain and Decorative: A Practical Treatise on the Art and Craft of Plastering and Modeling*. Millar explains that, in Italy, lime stucco is often executed in color and that the same may be done with interior plaster. To achieve this colored stucco or plaster, he suggests "mixing in the lime various oxides" and that such colors as "blacks are obtained by using forge ashes containing particles of iron;...[and] reds by using litharge, or the red oxide of lead."[38] The original color scheme of the interior of St. Alphonsus, however, included more subtle colors characteristic of the period. As stated by Andrew Jackson Downing in *The Architecture of Country Houses* (published in 1850), the preferred palette

---

[37] Jacques Kelly. *St. Ignatius Parish, 1856-1981. An Historical Sketch.* Baltimore: St. Ignatius Church, 1981, p. 6.

[38] William Millar. *Plastering Plain and Decorative: A Practical Treatise on the Art and Craft of Plastering and Modeling*. New York: Truslove and Comba, 1897, p. 104.

for buildings of this time consisted of "soft and quiet shades called neutral tints, such as fawn, drab, gray, brown, etc."[39]

In addition to Downing's mention, there are references to similar colors in other period literature. In its section on "Practical Instructions: For Tints and Colours in Distemper," from *Church Decoration. A Manual of Appropriate Ornamentation* of 1874, recommendations for a church interior included such colors as "buff" and "pink" as well as a color consisting of light red and yellow ochre called a "warm tint."[40] The 1850 work by H.C. Baird, *The Painter, Gilder and Varnisher's Companion*, contains a recipe for a color called "flesh" which is produced by the "mixture of lake (cochineal or madder), white lead, and a little vermilion."[41] All of the colors mentioned above are similar to the color of the plaster found on the interior walls of St. Alphonsus, a warm pinkish-tan or flesh.

A simplistic, monochromatic scheme was common for a church interior during this period. In the mid-nineteenth century journal *The Ecclesiologist*, a publication dedicated to the dissemination of the theories of the Oxford Movement within the Anglican Church, much commentary on the decoration of church buildings is found. In an 1852 issue, a contributor writes of one way to embellish a church interior:

> For giving ornament and enrichment to the interiors of church...(use) colouring for its own sake...By this I mean, not, of course, as a rule, to exclude the use of symbols, but only to make their employment subordinate to the exhibition of colours themselves...It is the most effective kind of decoration. In one form or other it is within the reach of everyone; and it is just what it pretends to be, and nothing more...What we want to have generally understood is, that colour is a thing to be used for its own sake.[42]

Such writing suggests that at this time in England, and most likely also in European-influenced cities in this country, plain and simple was preferred over ornate and busy

---

[39] Andrew Jackson Downing. *The Architecture of Country Houses. Part I. Cheap Cottages and Farm-Houses, Adapted too the United States.* New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1850, p. 202.
[40] *Church Decoration. A Manual of Appropriate Ornamentation.* London: Frederick Warne, 1874, p. 43.
[41] H.C. Baird. *The Painter, Gilder, Varnisher's Companion.* 1850, p. 44.
[42] *The Ecclesiologist.* Volume 13 (April). London: 1852, p. 102-5.

decoration for church interiors. Decorative schemes based on a simple color palette were chosen over design patterns such as stenciling, which was thought to be offensive and distracting. The tinted plaster at St. Alphonsus represents just such a simple decorative scheme: pinkish-tan colored walls with an off-white ceiling.

After establishing the decorative treatment of the apse walls, other elements of the altar area were investigated. Elements such as the plaster door surrounds and reveals of the openings between the altar area and the sacristies were examined. These door surrounds, which are very similar to elements found in the cornice of the ceiling, can be seen in Figure 15. During this first period of decoration, most of the elements of the surround were treated simply, in varying shades of cream—colors similar to but paler than the pinkish-tan of the tinted plaster of the walls. Most elements of the surround were treated with a cream color, but the central flat band and the outermost molding were picked out in a darker version of the same cream. In addition, two elements were picked out in metallic gold: the bead and reel molding and portions of the large acanthus leaf design. The gold finish, which is applied over a bright yellow preparatory layer, appears to be true gold leaf. At high magnification, the metallic layer appears very thin, almost invisible, and lacks any corrosion product associated with less pure bronzing powders or leafs. The juxtaposition of giltwork with earthy, neutral colors is a predominant decorative motif which occurs throughout the church interior during this period.

The plaster door reveals in the altar area are adorned with a more complex decorative relief pattern. In fact, the design of the plaster work matches that of the plaster ribs on the ceiling. (See Figure 16) Both elements are dominated by an interwoven, guilloche design filled with rosettes, which is flanked on each side by a band of flat plaster. The reveal was originally treated in the same cream colors as the door surround. The first finish on the flat

Fig. 15. St. Alphonsus Church. Plaster door surround on the west wall of the apse. (Photograph by author)

Fig. 16. St. Alphonsus Church. Plaster door reveal on the west wall of apse. This plaster work is very similar to that which is found on the ceiling ribs. (Photograph by author)

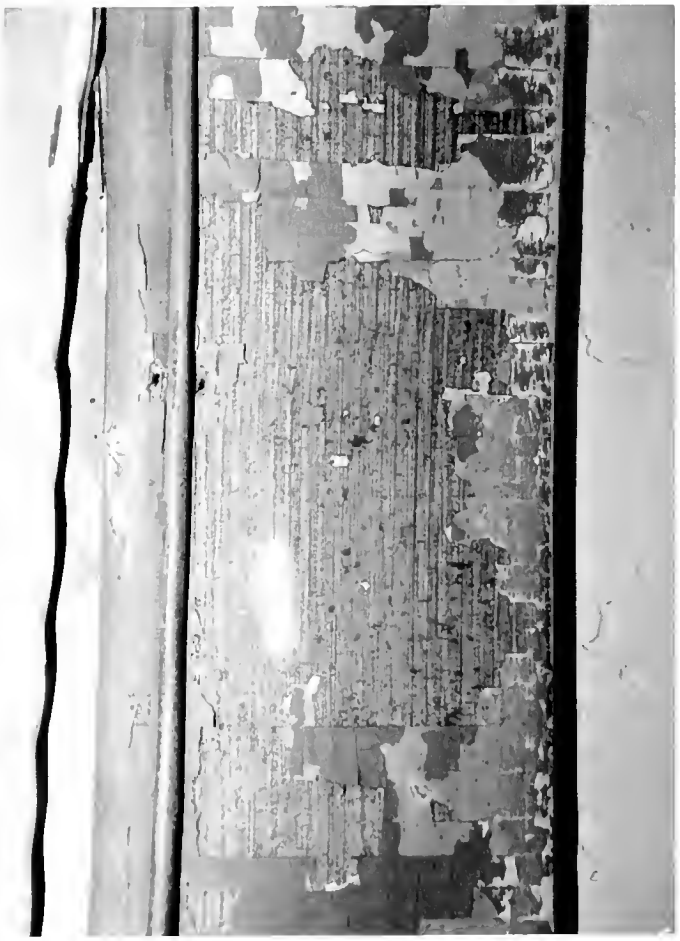


Fig. 17. St. Alphonsus Church. Originally grained molding of door reveal on western wall of apse. (Photograph by author)

plaster bands of the reveal is the same dark cream as seen on the central flat band of the door surround. The first finish on the central guilloche pattern is cream, the same cream as found on several elements of the surround. It is possible that the ceiling ribs, with the identical plaster work, would have shared the same decorative scheme as these door reveals originally.

The sacristy door reveals are bordered by a wooden frame on one side, to accommodate a pair of doors. Initially, this wooden element was treated separately, distinct from the adjacent plaster work. The wooden frame around the doors appears to have been finished in wood graining initially, a finish found on many elements throughout the interior of St. Alphonsus. Mechanical scraping of the frame with a scalpel revealed an imitative finish obviously intended to depict oak. (See Figure 17) This treatment extends to the adjacent plaster molding, which also contains evidence of the same campaign of early graining. Wood graining would have been an appropriate interior finish for the period in which St. Alphonsus was built and is even suggested by Downing as an economical substitute for varnished wood of a finer quality. He states:

> As a substitute... we would strongly recommend that the wood-work be...grained, in imitation of these woods [maple, birch, ash, black-walnut or oak]...The great advantage which grained wood-work has over that which is simply painted white or any plain neutral tint is, that it is so easily kept clean.[43]

NAVE WALLS

The pinkish-tan colored plaster found in the altar area was also discovered on both the east and west walls of the nave. (See Figures 18 and 19) As stated before, this tinted plaster would have been the intended, visible finish for the church during its first decade.

---

[43] A.J. Downing. *The Architecture of Country Houses. Part I. Cheap Cottages and Farm-Houses, Adapted too the United States.* New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1850. Reprinted New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1969, p. 367.

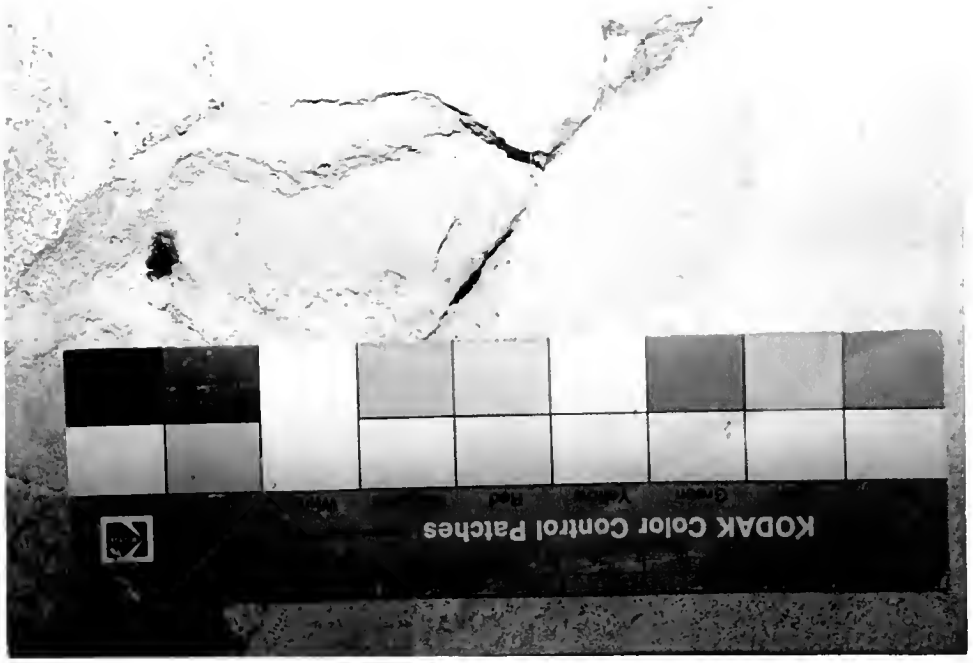


Fig. 18. St. Alphonsus Church. This photograph of an area on the east interior elevation shows both the gray base coat and the tinted pinkish-tan top coat of the original wall plaster. The tinted plaster is visible in the bottom right corner. (Photograph by author)

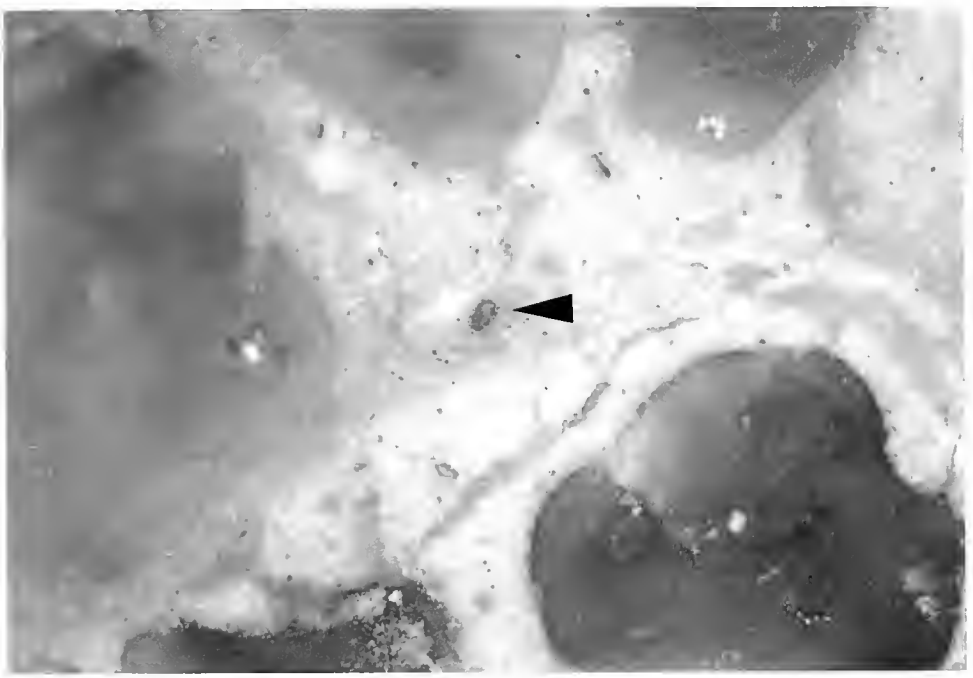


Fig. 19. St. Alphonsus Church. Under high magnification, the pigment particles that give the plaster its pinkish-tan color become visible. In the above photograph, red flecks of pigment can be seen in the plaster matrix, between grains of sand. 25x magnification. (Photograph by author)

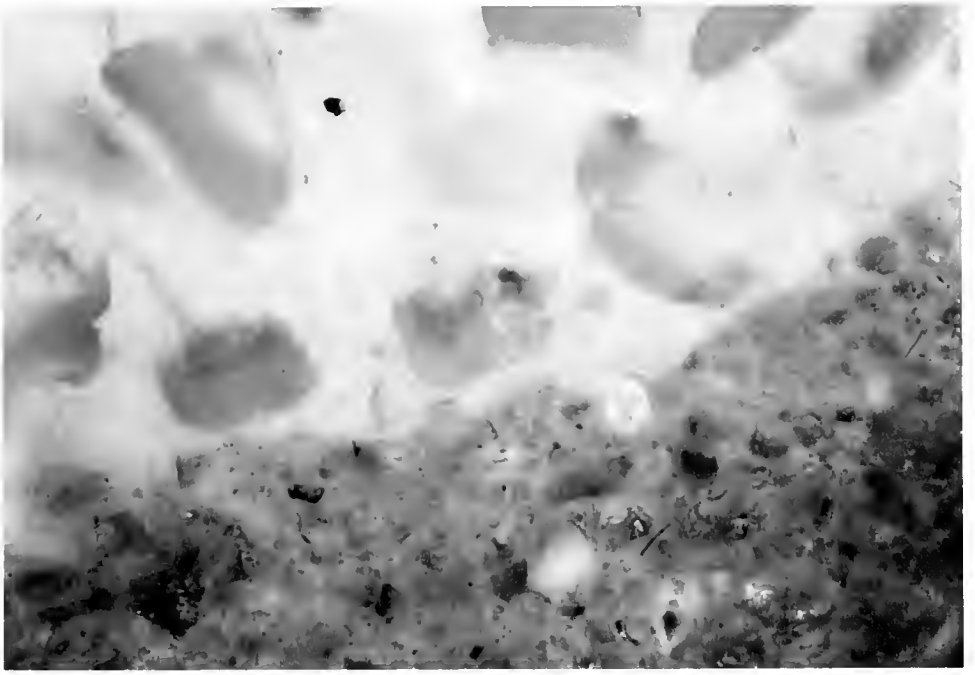


Fig. 20. St. Alphonsus Church. Photomicrograph of the ceiling plaster, showing the gray base coat (the same as that used for the church walls) and the off-white finish coat. 10x magnification. (Photograph by the author)

CEILING

Much like the walls of the church during the period of 1857 to 1866, the ceiling was left devoid of painted decoration. It was coved and divided into panels by ornate plaster ribs, but it lacked any painting—plain, figurative or symbolic. Its pale gray base coat, which appears to be the same as the base coat found on the walls, was topped with a thin, off-white finish coat which would receive elaborate paintings at a later date. This finish coat appears similar in composition to the walls' finish plaster, but was left white instead of being tinted. (See Figure 20) Such a color combination, pinkish-tan walls and an off-white ceiling, was recommended by Downing. In *The Architecture of Country Houses*, he poses that:

> Where a better effect than that of a mere white wall is desired, it is easily obtained by coloring the ceiling white, and the side walls of a delicate neutral tint—such as fawn, or drab, or gray...the superiority of effect, to those who are not fond of the intolerable glare of white, is incalculable.[44]

NAVE WINDOWS

During this period, the windows did not contain colored, stained glass. In the Packard and Butler lithograph as well as Long's original elevations of St. Alphonsus, the windows appear to contain clear glass in a series of small, rectilinear panes with rounded panes at the top. (See Figure 4) Although the stained glass windows that exist today were installed in 1889, the wood window frames appear to be original—being re-used for the new windows. The openings for the present large, circular-headed windows seem to be the same size and shape as the earlier windows depicted in the lithograph. However, the rectangular, pivoted windows below these large windows were added sometime after the church's erection, most likely at the same time the fixed stained glass windows were installed. Prior to their installation, the

[44] Ibid.

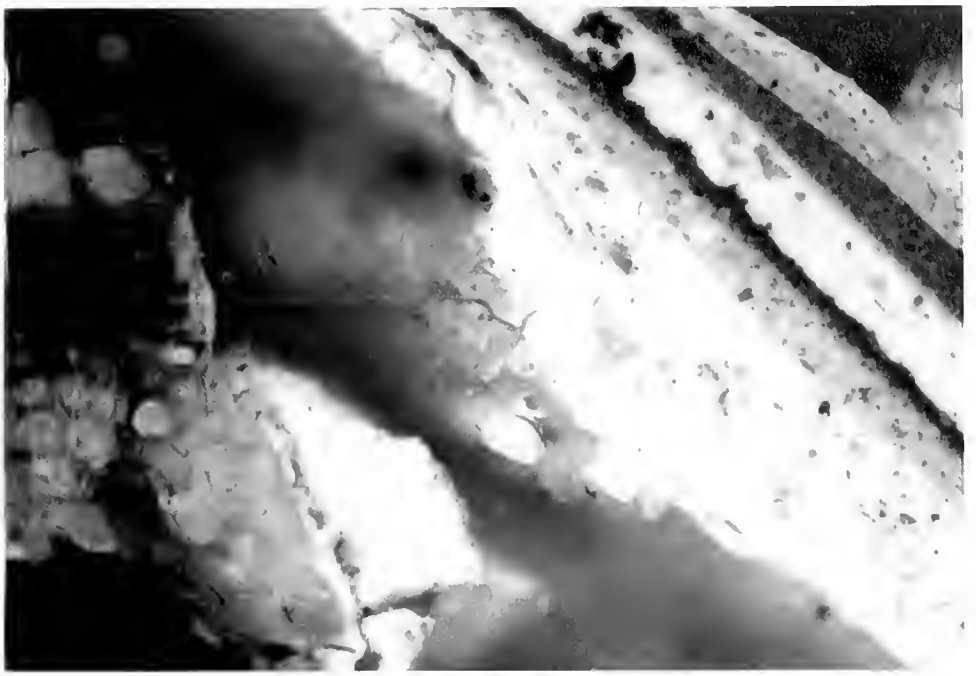


Fig. 21. St. Alphonsus Church. This photomicrograph of sample # 1E-30, removed from the jamb of a window opening on the east side of the church, shows all of the paint layers for the window trim (including those applied before the 1888 installation of the stained glass windows). 25x magnification. (Photograph by author)

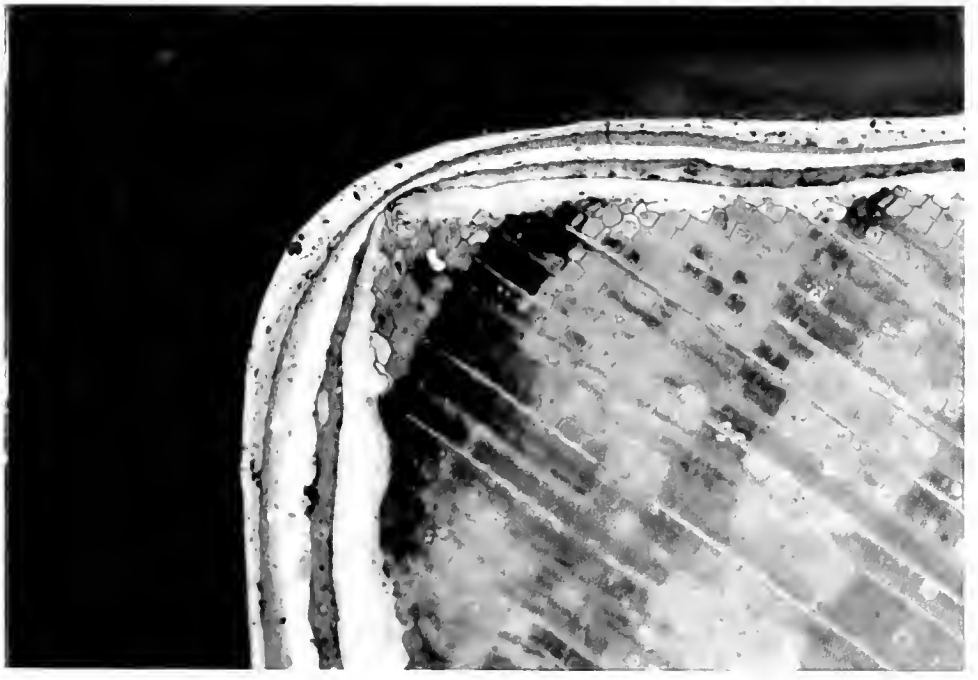


Fig. 22. St. Alphonsus Church. This photomicrograph of sample #1W-06, removed from the divider between the stained glass windows and the operable windows, shows the finishes applied to the window trim *after* 1888. 10x magnification. (Photograph by author)

area below the windows was solid masonry, as the Packard and Butler lithograph in Figure 10 illustrates. Examination of the existing paint layers on both the frame for the large upper windows and the frame for the pivoted windows supports the theory that the upper window frames are older. Both frames share the same early paint stratigraphy but the upper window frames have several additional, earlier layers. (See Figures 21 and 22) It is these early layers that are relevant to this initial period of interior decoration as they illustrate how the original window frames and sash were treated before the 1889 addition of the stained glass windows.

The first finish present on the frame of the large, rounded stained glass windows is a white primer layer which is topped by a warm cream finish. This cream appears on the frames of upper windows on both the east and west side of the church, where it was found on the large mullion separating the panels of stained glass and on the division bar between the fixed and pivoted windows. The cream found on the window trim continues the neutral color scheme of the original interior of St. Alphonsus.

CORNICE

Although the cornice itself was inaccessible during the on site investigation, representative pieces of the cornice which had fallen from a damaged portion of the wall, were collected and examined in the laboratory. Although not all of the cornice moldings could be examined, the cornice's overall appearance can be approximated through the investigation of those sections that were available. (See Figure 23)

Like the rest of the church's interior, the cornice was originally finished in a simple fashion with only a few details treated ornately. Although some flat background areas were first treated or primed with a waxy, orange-brown finish, the majority of the elements examined were initially finished in a matte, warm cream color. (See Figure 24) This cream

Fig. 23. St. Alphonsus Church. The various moldings of the plaster cornice. (Photograph by author)

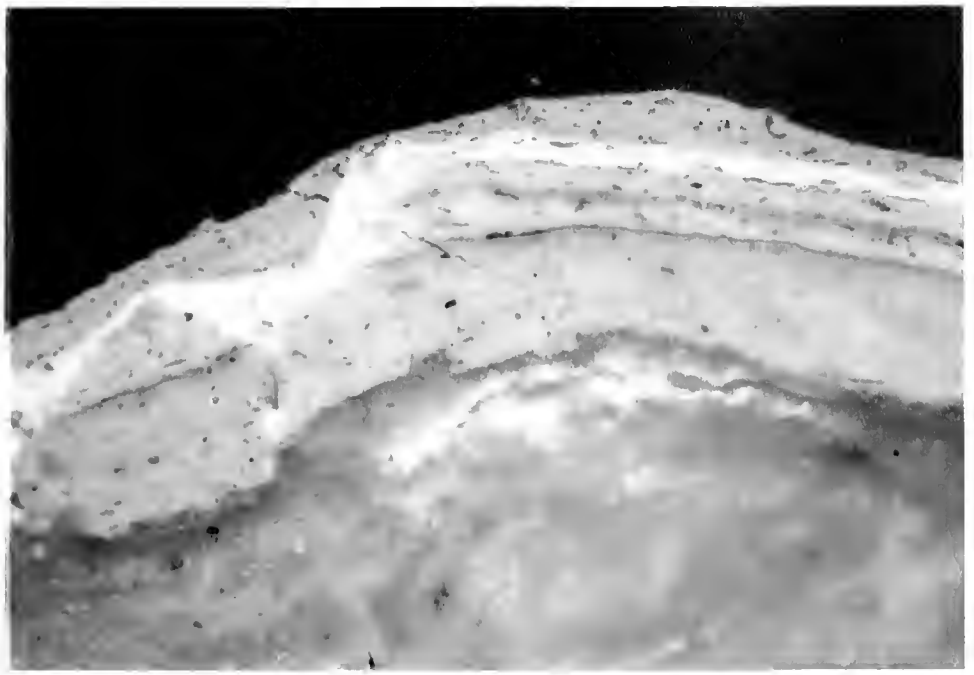


Fig. 24. St. Alphonsus Church. The above photomicrograph illustrates the various paint layers applied to one of the cornice moldings, the flat area behind the dentils (Sample # 2E-35). This particular element has always been treated in pale, off-white colors. 10x magnification. (Photograph by author)

Fig. 25. St. Alphonsus Church. The finishes found on a sample removed from another of the cornice moldings, the ovolo molding above the dentils (Sample #2E-34). This element was treated with a metallic finish twice in its early history and then with more neutral colors. 10x magnification. (Photograph by author)

color varies slightly from one element to the next, occasionally appearing a bit more pink or more brown. This variation in color may have been intentional or it could be that this finish has aged inconsistently.

An ornate original treatment was found on only two elements of the cornice: the ovolo and bead-and-reel moldings. On the ovolo molding above the dentils, traces of bright yellow undercoat and metallic gold were found. (See Figure 25) These applied finishes, which were found directly on the white plaster, indicate a campaign of gilded banding along the edges of the molding—the yellow layer being a preparatory size and the thin metallic layer being gold leaf. A similar gilding campaign was found on the bead and reel molding of the cornice, which was entirely gilded. The cornice and the plaster door surrounds in the altar area, which share the same decorative moldings, appear to have been treated in a similar fashion. They are both finished in a cream color and both have occasional gilded elements, including a bead-and-reel molding finished entirely in metallic gold.

FULL AND ENGAGED PLASTER COLUMNS

On site investigation revealed a pale buff color as the first paint layer on both the shafts and bases of all of the plaster columns. (See Figure 26) This color is matte in appearance, light in hue and very chalky to the touch. Although the columns are finished with a thin white plaster, it appears that the applied warm buff paint was intended to complement the tinted plaster of the walls.

Generally, the full columns of the sanctuary and the engaged columns found throughout the entire church have the buff paint as their first finish, applied uniformly onto a thin, white finish coat of plaster. However, traces of a concurrent darker flesh color were found on both the engaged columns of the apse and some of the columns investigated in the

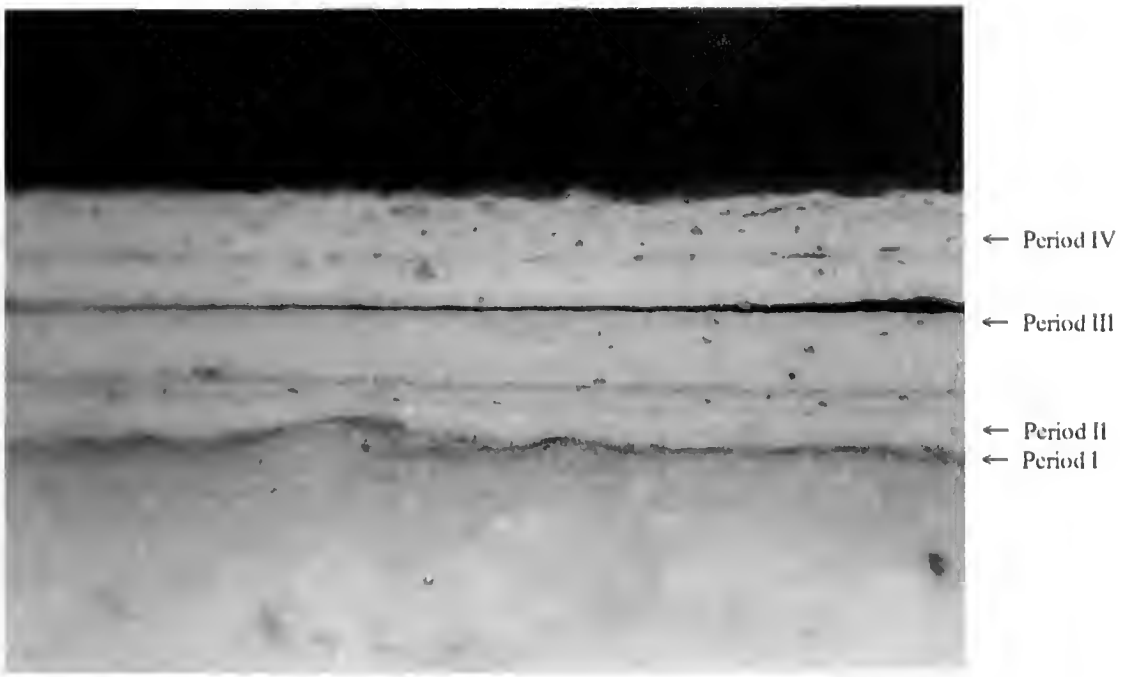


Fig. 26. St. Alphonsus Church. Sample #2E-12, removed from a column shaft, illustrates the various colors the columns have been painted, including the original buff color. 10x magnification. (Photograph by author)

Fig. 27. St. Alphonsus Church. One of the cast metal, Corinthian column capitals in the church. (Photograph by author)

nave. On each of these columns, the darker finish was found on the bottom band of its base, the torus. On the apse area columns, the channeling of the flutes also contain this darker color. The presence of this dark flesh color in the channels juxtaposed with the pale buff color of the flutes may indicate that the shafts of the altar area columns were originally treated in contrasting colors to produce a shadowing effect. Looking at early images of the church's interior, such as the 1897 photograph in Figure 11, there does appear to be some contrast between the colors on the fluted shafts of the altar area columns. However, the contrast visible in the photograph may be a result of actual light and shadow. It is more likely that the color of this paint layer has become inconsistent over the years due to age and deterioration.

The plaster columns are topped by cast iron, Corinthian capitals. (See Figure 27) These capitals are primed completely with an orange-red layer, applied directly on the metal in all but a few of the areas examined. On some elements of the capital, such as the "torch", a gray layer was found below the orange primer layer. This gray finish, applied in a thick and irregular manner, appears to contain sand and may have been used to compensate certain details of the metal capital which did not come out well in the casting process. For all elements of the capital, the first finish applied over the orange primer appears to be the same: a thick applications of a creamy buff. (See Figure 28) However, both bottom bands of the capital and the acanthus leaf motif are treated with an additional brown paint. The brown paint layer is visible in the photomicrographs of samples removed from these areas. Painting these select elements of the capital a darker brown color produced a pure contrast, continuing the simple treatment of the interior and the use of subdued, natural colors.

At some point prior to September of 1866, however, a metallic finish was applied to the column capitals. Both physical evidence and historical evidence support such a finish for

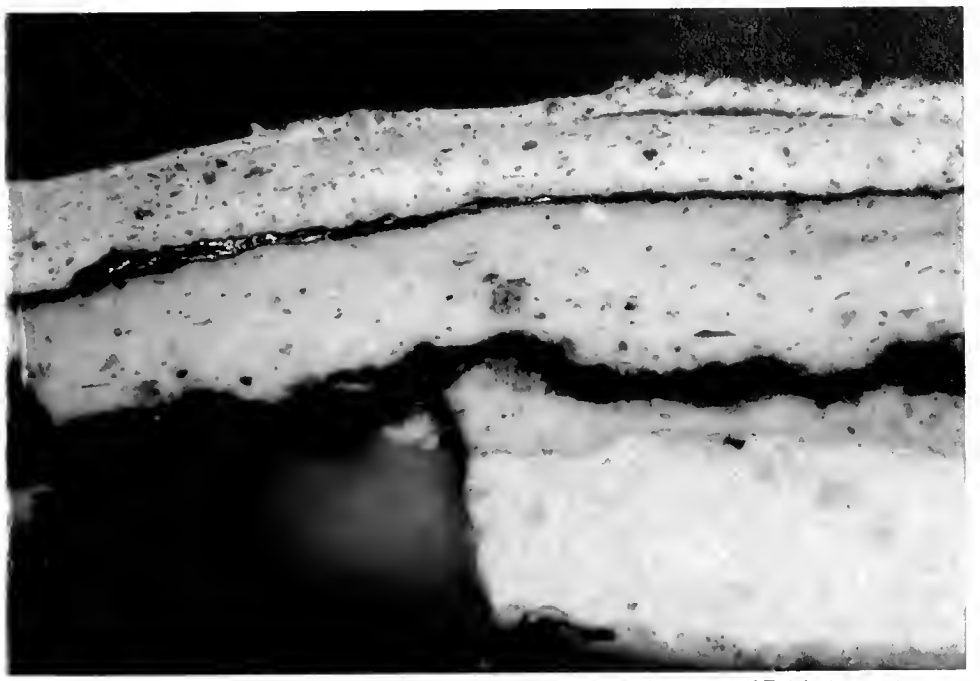


Fig. 28. St. Alphonsus Church. The above photomicrograph of sample #2E-16 shows the various finishes found on the cast metal column capitals. At the bottom of the photograph is the red primer layer, followed by cream, then two different campaigns of metallic gold. 10x magnification. (Photograph by author)

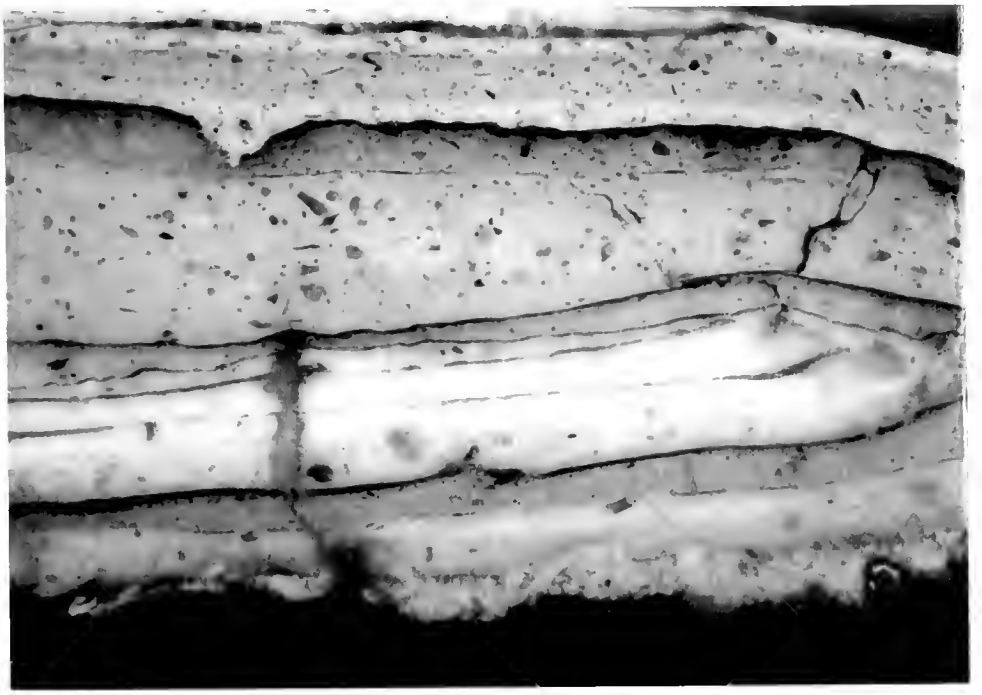


Fig. 29. St. Alphonsus Church. This photomicrograph of sample #1E-09 illustrates the finish history of the cast iron columns, which support the choir loft. The red primer layer is visible at the bottom of the photograph, as is the subsequent three-layer graining campaign. 10x magnification. (Photograph by author)

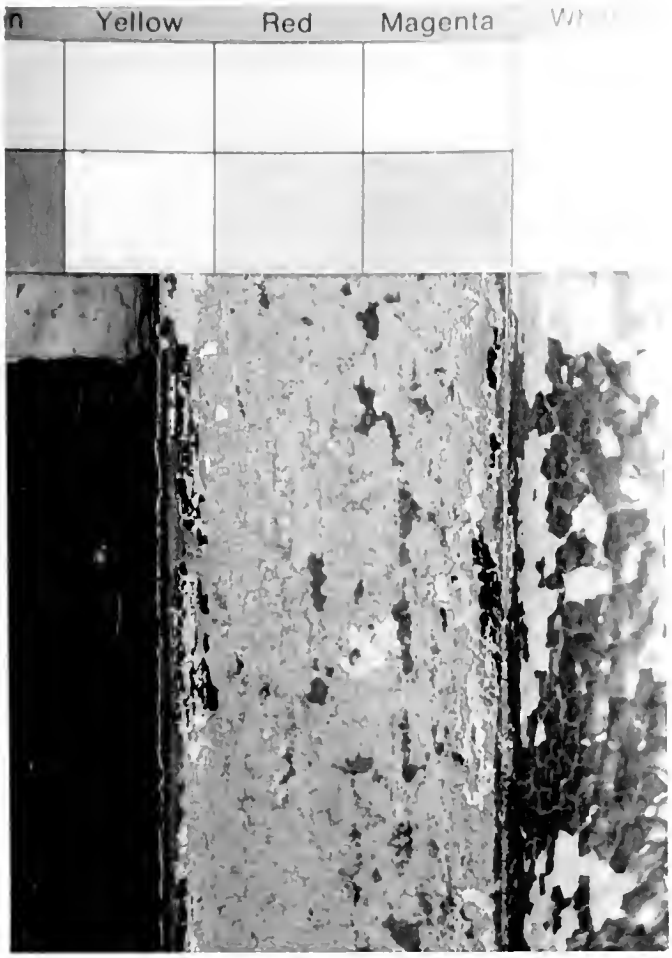


Fig. 30. St. Alphonsus Church. The more recent paint layers on a cast iron column were removed, to reveal the column's first finish: oak-graining. (Photograph by author)

the capitals. In an 1866 newspaper article describing the interior of St. Alphonsus, the author mentions that the "wide and spacious galleries are pinned to the gilded columns within."[45] Because no evidence of a metallic finish was found on the column shafts, this observation must refer to the column capitals. This adornment most likely occurred during the early stages of the 1866-68 decorative painting campaign, which the *New Orleans Times* article documented, though it is possible that it was instituted prior to this time.

The metallic gold finish is visible on the capitals themselves and in the cross-sections of the samples taken from the column capitals. (See Figure 28) Manual removal of overlying paint on the capitals revealed the early metallic gold finish. In addition, cross-sections show the same metallic finish applied directly over the early cream paint layer that originally decorated the capitals. The metallic finish is platy and thick when viewed under high magnification, indicating that it is a bronzing powder and liquid. The metallic finish is interspersed with a pale green color, most likely the product of oxidation. Bronzing is generally composed of extremely thin flakes of either copper-zinc alloys (brass) or copper-tin alloys (bronze) combined with a binder and an organic solvent. The former is used in imitation gold paint and, depending on the alloy composition, numerous shades and colors can be made.[46] These copper-based finishes tend to oxidize and produce a green corrosion product, explaining the green particles seen in the cross-sections of the samples from the column capitals.

---

[45] *The New Orleans Times*. September 9, 1866, p. 6.
[46] Rutherford J. Gettens and George L. Stout. *Painting Materials. A Short Encyclopedia*. New York: Dover Publications, 1966, p. 100.

CAST IRON COLUMNS

The fluted cast iron columns, which support the balcony and choir loft, were examined both on site and in the laboratory. Both investigations showed the earliest finishes on these columns to be an orange primer topped by a campaign of wood graining, the latter being the intended first finish. (See Figures 29 and 30) The graining is in imitation of oak and, as pointed out previously, such a technique was generally accepted and advocated as an appropriate finish for a building's interior in the mid-nineteenth century. The grained finish was applied to both the shaft and the base of the columns, completely disguising its cast iron composition.

This particular finish is actually a three-part system, as illustrated in the cross-section seen in Figure 30. In cross-section, the multi-layered composition of this imitative finish can be clearly seen. The thick cream layer represents the ground coat on top of which the gold-brown glaze was applied to simulate the grain of the wood. The thin, top brown layer is a tinted clear coating. Exposed portions of this finish illustrate the rather simple technique the artist employed in the execution of this imitative finish. The comb or brush strokes of the brown overgraining layer are roughly applied in a simplistic manner. The Doric capitals of these columns also appear to have been treated with a grained finish originally. However, this element was examined on site only and was not sampled in order to be analyzed in the laboratory. On site, the first finish campaign of the capital appears to be a pale cream layer topped by a brown layer. It is unclear if this is the same graining layer found on the rest of the column or if the capitals had a monochromatic brown treatment. However, it seems likely that the capitals would have been finished like the rest of the column.

BALCONY/CHOIR LOFT

Like the cast iron columns that support it, the paneled front of the choir loft was also grained originally. Although *in situ* exposures of the finishes on balcony front were not possible, samples were removed from each element of the upper moldings and the paneling. (See Figure 31) The samples revealed that the first finish was a multi-layer system very similar to that found on the cast iron columns. Like the finish found on the columns, the choir loft's original finish also consists of a primer, a cream-colored ground layer, brown overgraining, and a brown resinous coating (most likely a varnish). The similarity in the colors of each of these finish layers with those of the cast iron columns suggests that the balcony front was also painted in imitation of oak. The hand rail, however, was painted a solid dark brown color.

Although the interior of St. Alphonsus at this time was very simple, imitative finishes such as graining were employed in numerous prominent locations throughout the church in order to give it a richer appearance. The oak graining added a sense of embellishment to ordinary building materials while maintaining the guiding principal of a simple and pure decorative scheme.

MAIN ENTRYWAY

The same pinkish-tan colored plaster found on the nave and apse walls was also located on the walls of the main entryway, suggesting the entire church was initially treated uniformly.

Fig. 31. St. Alphonsus Church. A detail of the front of the church's choir loft. (Photograph by author)

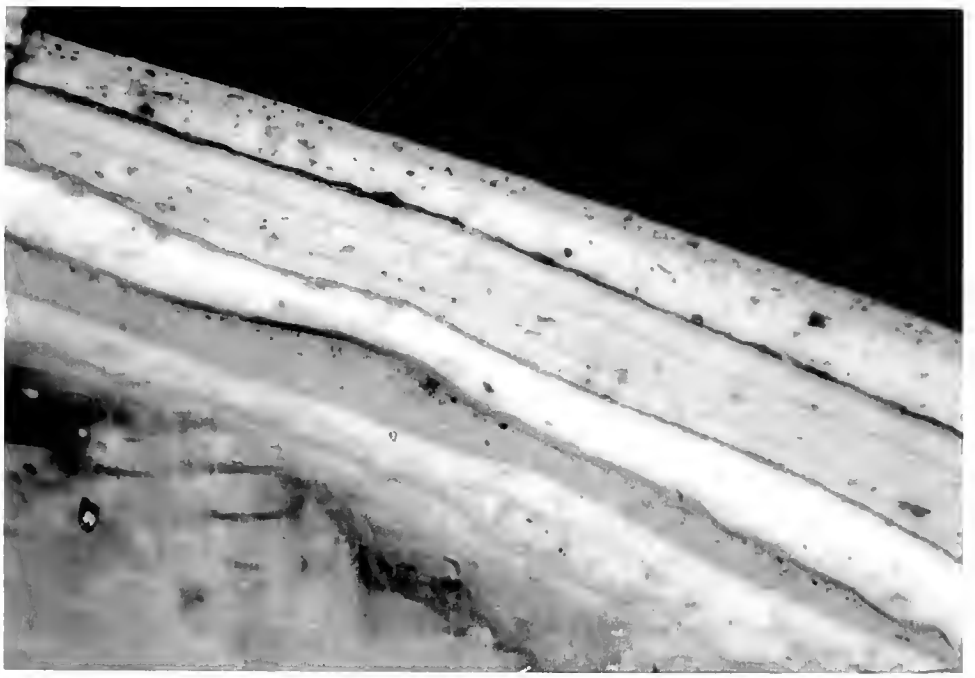


Fig. 32. St. Alphonsus Church. This cross-section of sample #2E-28, taken from one of the moldings surrounding a panel on the choir loft front, shows the various finishes applied to this element. The three-layer graining campaign is visible at the bottom of the image. 10x magnification. (Photograph by author)

STAIRWELLS AND SIDE ENTRIES

The same tinted plaster was also found on the walls of both the side entries and the stairwells. Like many other elements in the interior, the wall stringer (the baseboard-like piece that connects the stairs to the plaster wall) was originally grained in imitation of oak. (See Figure 33) In addition, the wainscot appears to have been simply stained originally.

Fig. 33. St. Alphonsus Church. Peeling paint on the wall stringer of the east stairhall exposed the element's original grained finish. (Photograph by the author)

4.3.2 Period II Surface Treatments (1866 - ca. 1920)

SUMMARY OF PERIOD II

The beginning of this period is marked by the extensive ornamental painting carried out by three Italian artists, including Dominique Canova. Their work, which adorned both the walls and ceiling of St. Alphonsus, remained the dominant decorative scheme of St. Alphonsus' interior for more than forty years. The paintings executed by these artists were a combination of figural scenes and *trompe l'oeil*. The figural paintings remain visible on the church's ceiling while the various *trompe l'oeil* paintings have unfortunately been painted over. The *trompe l'oeil* paintings depicted plaster relief work and other architectural ornament which ranged from simple to elaborate. The colors employed in this decorative paint campaign are earthy and subtle. Colors such as salmon, brown, gray and dark red are found in all of the paintings of this period including the figural ceiling paintings.

The overall decorative scheme of this period is quite lavish, especially when compared to the simplistic interior of Period I. In addition to the series of elaborate wall and ceiling paintings, many elements of the interior were gilded. It was this highly ornamented interior that prompted James S. Zacherie to comment in his 1893 *New Orleans Guide*

> on entering the Church the stranger is immediately struck by the profuse ornamentation, on which the painter and guilder have done their utmost. The dominant colors are white and gold, and the lavish way the latter has been used, while giving an air of great richness, is considered by many to be in questionable taste.[47]

[47] James S. Zacharie. *New Orleans Guide*. New Orleans: F.F. Hansell & Bro., Ltd., 1893, p. 74.

ALTAR AREA AND SANCTUARY

The interior of St. Alphonsus during this period was defined by its elaborate painted finishes. The Italian artists, led by Dominique Canova, produced a series of figural and imitative finishes unlike any other in New Orleans at the time. While the figural paintings represent some of Canova's finest work, the *trompe l'oeil* was also a significant part of the overall decorative scheme and is deserving of attention. The use of imitative finishes in a Redemptorist church would not have been unusual. One Redemptorist church in Baltimore (also named St. Alphonsus) was a brick building painted gray to resemble stone—specified by Robert Long himself—and the interior contained marbled plaster columns.[48] Although the marbled columns may not have been part of the original decorative scheme of the church, their presence indicates the Redemptorists' affinity for such finishes. Historical photographs of the interior of St. Alphonsus Church in New Orleans reveal that it too contained elaborate, imitative finishes.

In the Packard and Butler lithograph and the various historical photographs presented earlier, a variety of *trompe l'oeil* wall paintings are visible inside St. Alphonsus. (See Figures 10 through 13) Paintings depicting various architectural details—pilasters, brackets, plaster relief and panels of inlaid marble—decorate the walls and ceiling. The *trompe l'oeil* paintings would have complemented the figural ceiling paintings, creating an interior that appeared rich in detail and ornament. This decorative painting was most likely executed in 1866 when it was documented in newspaper articles that Italian artists were "frescoing" the ceiling of the church. Because the interior appears more or less the same in the lithograph as well as the 1897 and 1908 photographs, this suggests that the overall interior decorative scheme remained the same from the time the lithograph was executed until some time after 1908. This time frame represents a period of over forty years.

---

[48] Dorsey, 42.

The historical images illustrate that the apse area contained the most elaborate wall paintings during this period—what appear to be intricately painted panels of polished marble. These panels combine contrasting light and dark colors, which are swirled and mottled in imitation of marble. To confirm the existence of these paintings and investigate them further, evidence of the painted panels was sought on site. In several locations the ghost or silhouette of an early *trompe l'oeil* panel was uncovered, but no evidence of the marbling. (See Figures 34 through 36) Unfortunately, the tendency of the paint to flake off of the wall, pulling a thin layer of the painted plaster with it, made it difficult to expose the design in its entirety. However, historic images of St. Alphonsus suggest that the paneling uncovered is the same as that depicted in the earliest images of the interior.

The exposed silhouettes provide only a small amount of information about what the panels actually looked like. The historical images of St. Alphonsus' altar area are still the best source of information for these paintings. The uncovered evidence does, however, provide information on the exact size, shape and location of the panels as well as some of the colors employed in this particular decorative scheme. The colors employed in this decorative paint campaign are earthy and subtle; colors such as salmon, brown, gray, olive green and Pompeiian red. A section of the painted panel was uncovered on the portion of the wall between the altar and the door to the east sacristy (presently a museum). In this area, edges of the panel were revealed, showing the different colors used for the field and for the panel. The panel is dark salmon and has a deep red band outlining it. The darkly colored panel contrasts with the pale salmon walls—a color which is very similar to the tinted plaster of Period I.

Fig. 34. St. Alphonsus Church. A "ghost" of the original painted *trompe l'oeil* panels in the altar area. This exposure window was created on the east wall of the apse. (Photograph by author)

Fig. 35. St. Alphonsus Church. An exposure window was made on the western portion of the apse wall, at the window level, to reveal the pattern of some of the early *trompe l'oeil* paintings. (Photograph by author)

Fig. 36. St. Alphonsus Church. A detail of the exposed "ghost" of a *trompe l'oeil* marble panel. The pale salmon field is visible as is the striping of the panel's bottom border. The color of the striping remains unknown; it was left white as the poorly adhered original paint came off with the overpaint. (Photograph by author)

The sanctuary walls contained much simpler decorative painting, more in keeping with the decorative painting found on the walls of the nave. The walls of the sanctuary were painted with a series of *trompe l'oeil* panels, which appear much more simple than those of the apse. Two vertical rectangular panels flanked the side altars while, above each altar, horizontally oriented rectangular panels with pairs of *trompe l'oeil* brackets decorated the wall. (See Figures 12 and 37) These panels appear to lack the marbling and strong colors found in the apse area paintings. Although the sanctuary is certainly a significant area within the church, it is secondary to the central altar area and its decoration reflects this. The decorative treatment of the sanctuary ceiling, above the side altars, was not identified in this study. The ceiling is not represented in historic photographs and no on site investigation was conducted; however, it may have also been adorned with figural or *trompe l'oeil* painting.

It should be noted that, during the course of the physical investigation and microscopic analysis of the finishes, question arose as to the exact time in which the *trompe l'oeil* paintings were executed. Although it seems likely that the *trompe l'oeil* was executed while the Italian artists were in residence, examination of paint samples in cross-section suggested that the imitative painting may have been applied earlier, during Period I. Examination of the samples revealed no dirt layer or point of fracture between the surface of the tinted plaster and the *trompe l'oeil* paint layer directly over it, indicating the plaster did not sit exposed for long. The *trompe l'oeil* paintings and the figural work on the ceiling were clearly executed by different hands, but whether or not the hands were working simultaneously is not clear. Unfortunately, the earliest image of the interior depicts the church after the completion of the ceiling paintings. While the evidence collected does not resolve the question of when the *trompe l'oeil* was executed, the paintings undoubtedly play an integral part of the overall decorative scheme of Period II.

Fig. 37. St. Alphonsus Church. An interior photograph of the altar area and sanctuary, ca. 1892-1908. The *trompe l'oeil* painting— the marble panels in the apse and the paneling on the sanctuary walls—are particularly visible in this photograph. (Photograph courtesy of George Groetsch)

The plaster relief door surrounds and reveals in the altar area did not change much from their Period 1 decorative scheme, according to both *in situ* and microscopic examination. The plaster elements originally treated in metallic gold remained untouched, while the remaining areas were re-painted with a tan color. However, typical of the embellishment associated with Period II, three additional moldings were treated in gold. The bead molding of the surround as well as the repeating rosette and *fleur-de-lis* designs of the reveal were picked out in gold during this period. The metallic gold appears to be gold leaf—it is exceptionally thin in cross-section and is laid on a bright yellow ground. (See Figure 38)

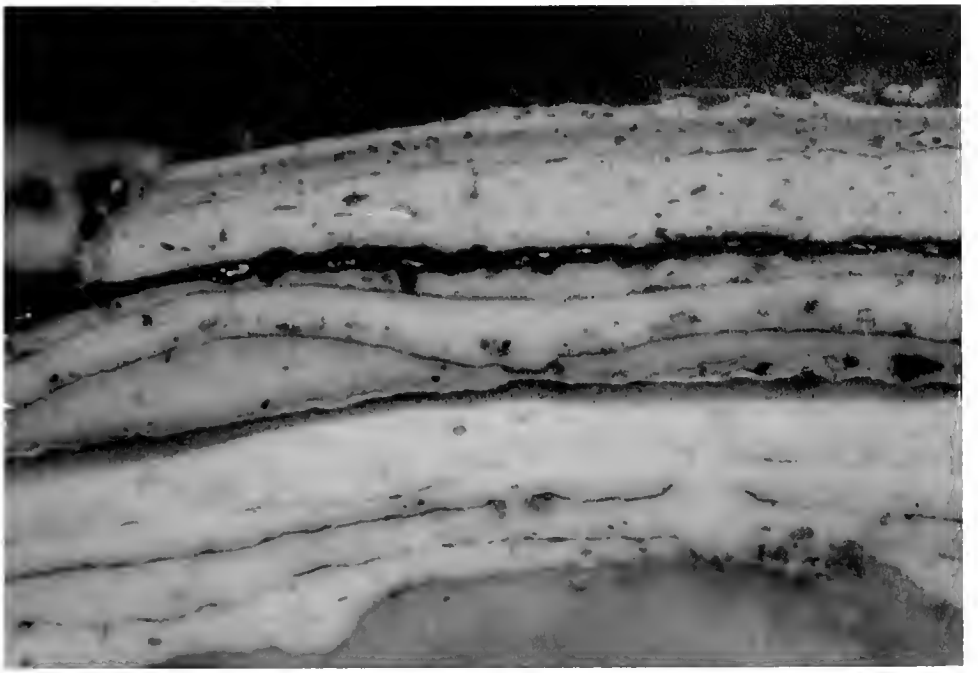


Fig. 38. St. Alphonsus Church. This photomicrograph of Sample #1W-11(a), removed from the rosette molding of the apse door reveal, shows the finishes applied to this particular element of the plaster reveal. The metallic gold layer of Period II is visible in the middle of the photomicrograph: the white primer layer and bright yellow ground topped by an almost invisible line that constitutes the gold leaf. The cream finish from Period I is visible at the bottom of the photograph. 10x magnification. (Photograph by author)

NAVE WALLS

While the altar area contained the most elaborate of the *trompe l'oeil* paintings, the walls of the nave were treated in a more simple fashion with paintings of three-dimensional pilasters or panels (like those found on the sanctuary walls). Each vertical *trompe l'oeil* pilaster is divided into three parts: two rectilinear panels interrupted by a round panel at the center. There also appear to be horizontally oriented rectangular panels between the window sill and the top of the wainscoting (in the space presently occupied by the pivoting windows). The *trompe l'oeil* pilasters extend from the bottom of the original (non-stained glass) window openings to at least the bottom of the balcony. How far the paintings extend up the wall was not established in this study, nor is it visible in the historical photographs of the church's interior.

The Packard and Butler lithograph, which depicts the entire front half of the church and not just the altar area, is one of only two historic images that depicts a large portion of St. Alphonsus' interior. It is also one of two images in which the nave walls are visible. In the lithograph, not only are the original borders surrounding the ceiling paintings visible but there also appears to be decorative painting adorning the flat wall space. The decorative wall paintings are in the form of architectural elements depicting such three-dimensional features as wood panels and sculpted brackets. All of these *trompe l'oeil* paintings would have complemented both the figural and decorative ceiling paintings, some of which also depicted three-dimensional architectural elements. This type of decorative painting was popular throughout the United States during the mid- to late-nineteenth century and decorated many building interiors in New Orleans. One example of very similar imitative painting depicting vertical, recessed panels can be seen in the photograph of the Lafayette Folger House. (See Figure 39) This private residence, which was designed by Lewis Reynolds and built in 1868

Fig. 39. Lafayette Folger House. New Orleans, Louisiana. This residential house, designed by Lewis Reynolds and built in 1868, contained very similar *trompe l'oeil* wall paintings as those found in the nave at St. Alphonsus. The house has since been demolished (Photograph courtesy of Henry W. Krotzer)

Fig. 40. St. Alphonsus Church. An interior photograph of the western side altar in the sanctuary, ca. 1892-1908. One of the *trompe l'oeil* panels is visible on the west wall next to the engaged column. A portion of this same painting is currently preserved behind an altar added in 1908. (Photograph courtesy of George Groetsch)

(the same year the interior of St. Alphonsus was being decoratively painted), was located on the corner of Second Street and St. Charles Avenue in New Orleans. The painting is similar to that found at St. Alphonsus, with its panels and striped borders dividing the wall plane. Unfortunately, this house has since been demolished.

In addition to the lithograph of the church interior, an undated photograph provided by the Friends of St. Alphonsus also depicts the three-dimensional nave paintings. (See Figure 40) In this photograph, believed to date from ca. 1892-1908 because of the presence of electricity and the absence of the Bendernagel side altars, a *trompe l'oeil* panel is clearly visible. The photograph captures the panel's vertical lines, meant to imitate molding and shadow, as well as the curved top of the panel which complements the round detail in the center of the painting.

Because the Packard and Butler lithograph and the undated photograph are the only historic sources, written or visual, which contain information on the nave wall paintings, the building itself was investigated to gather more information on these paintings. With the lithograph acting as a guide, the walls of the nave were examined in raking light. The light revealed the shadow of several of the vertical panels under many layers of paint. (See Figure 41) After the survival of the paintings was verified, the painting depicted in the undated photograph was sought. The side altar on the west wall of the church was pulled away from the wall to expose the area behind it-the same area depicted in the photograph. Incredibly, the altar had been installed while the *trompe l'oeil* paintings still decorated the walls and was simply pushed up against the painted wall, preserving the intact decorative scheme. (See Figures 42 and 43) As it remains today, the badly deteriorated wall painting exhibits approximately seven vertical bands of earth-colored tones (umber, sienna, ochre and gray). The middle of the panel is a peach/buff color. This latter color is similar to two other

Fig. 41. St. Alphonsus Church. Raking light revealed the existence of the *trompe l'oeil* paintings under years of subsequent paint. (Photograph by author)

Fig. 42. St. Alphonsus Church. The central portion of a *trompe l'oeil* wall painting preserved behind the Sacred Heart altar on the west wall of the nave. The earthy color palette of this period's finish scheme is exhibited in this photograph. (Photograph by author)

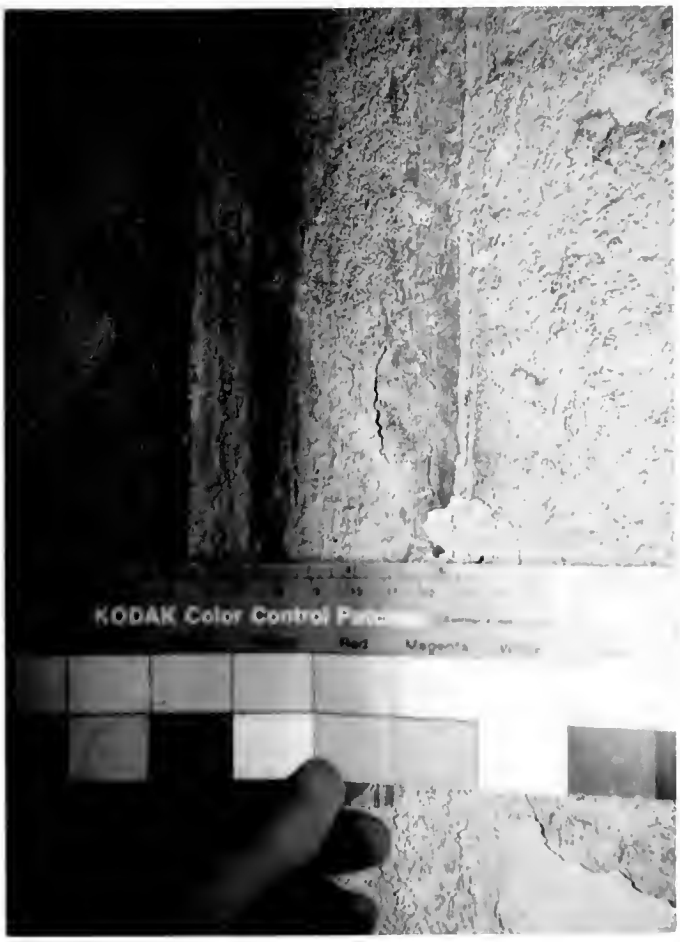


Fig. 43. St. Alphonsus Church. A detail of the painted panel preserved on the west wall. The vertical lines are intended to imitate molding and shadow. (Photograph by author)

bands of color and may serve as the background or ground layer for this particular campaign.

The uncovered wall painting was photographed, its poor condition noted and a small portion which was already detaching was removed for further analysis. (See Figure 44) Each band was sampled and cross-sections of each color prepared. In cross section, a sample of this wall painting appears quite media-rich and resinous with occasional colorant particles. (See Figure 45) The medium of this particular paint layer is not clear. Its matte, powdery appearance, scarcity of colorant particles and high percentage of white pigment (most likely calcium carbonate) suggest it is a water-based finish, such as distemper or casein. A portion of the removed wall painting was subjected to various analytical tests, as outlined in Section 4.4 - Chemical Analysis of Selected Finishes, in order to gain a better understanding of the medium of the finish.

The wall painting was directly applied onto the rather rough, tinted plaster surface, possibly after the plaster surface was wet. Cross-sections of the wall painting revealed little to no dirt or fracture between the wall painting layer and the surface of the tinted plaster, as previously mentioned. The surface of the plaster may have been cleaned prior to the campaign of decorative painting and the wall wet down to prevent rapid absorption of the new paint layer; or the *trompe l'oeil* may have been applied earlier during Period I. Interior decorative painting executed on dried lime plaster, known as *fresco secco*, typically utilizes water-based paints such as casein or distemper. The dried plaster wall is saturated with limewater and the painting is carried out on the moistened wall using a paint bound in an aqueous medium. Such a finish differs from true fresco, which involves the application of pigments dispersed in only water onto wet lime plaster.[49] If the *fresco secco* technique was

[49] Ralph Mayer. *The Artist's Handbook of Materials and Techniques*. New York: The Viking Press, 1945, p. 276.

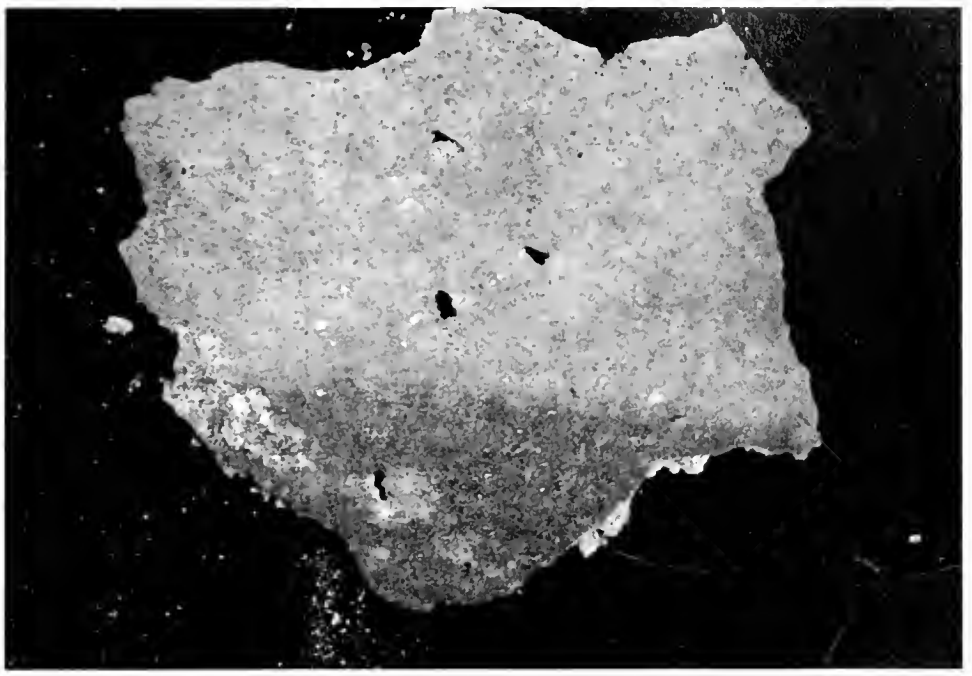


Fig. 44. St. Alphonsus Church. A portion of the removed wall painting, viewed under 3.75x magnification. Three different bands of color are visible: the pale salmon field (at top), pale brown (in center) and a chocolate-brown (at bottom). (Photograph by author)

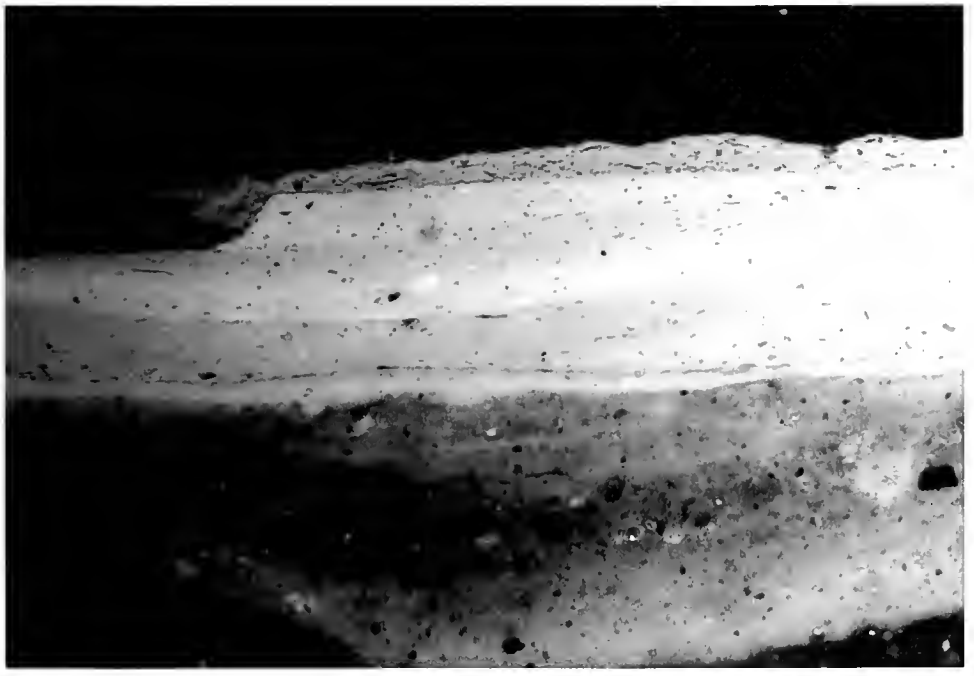


Fig. 45. St. Alphonsus Church. Sample # 1E-13, removed from the east wall of the nave, contains a particularly illustrative Period II paint layer. At the bottom of the photomicrograph is the thick, media-rich *trompe l'oeil* finish, with two different colors visible—salmon and brown. 10x magnification. (Photograph by author)

Fig. 46. St. Alphonsus Church. The back of a fragment of the Period II wall painting, removed from behind the Sacred Heart altar, demonstrates the tendency of this paint finish to cleave from the wall, pulling a thin layer of plaster with it. 3.75x magnification. (Photograph by author)

Fig. 47. St. Alphonsus Church. The ceiling paintings are presently in poor condition. Plaster detachment and staining have lead to areas of significant damage and, in some places, total loss. (Photograph by Robert S. Brantley and Jan White Brantley)

employed at St. Alphonsus during Period II or if the paintings were applied much earlier, this would explain the tendency of the paint to flake off of the wall, pulling a thin portion of the plaster and paint with it. In some cross-sections, such a fracture is apparent. (See Figure 46) There are also black particles, either particulate soiling or biological growth, present at the point of failure between the plaster and the wall painting layer. The biological growth may exist because of the presence of the water-based paint, which are rich in proteins and organic compounds on which such micro flora thrive.

Although the *trompe l'oeil* wall paintings may have been left exposed for this length of time, the interior decorative surfaces were more than likely touched up over the years. In fact, there are several references in various archival sources to the repainting and improvement of the church's interior. As the references are vague, it is difficult to determine the extent to which the interior was altered. However, the photographs suggest only minor work was carried out to "clean-up" the aging decorative campaign. Even as early as 1883, there was a need to repaint the building. As quoted in Wilson's *The Church of St. Alphonsus*,

> the interior and exterior of St. Alphonsus Church was repainted. This was very necessary, for many things were going to decay. The painting was done by Mr. Rauch and was finished in a few weeks. The contract for the work was $500.[50]

Photographs of the interior taken after 1883 show the decorative painting intact, suggesting Rauch's work was most likely limited to re-painting the fields and backgrounds of the existing *trompe l'oeil* paintings.

Exactly when the *trompe l'oeil* wall paintings in the nave and altar were partially over-painted is unknown. Historic photographs demonstrate that the paintings adorned the interior even after the side altars were installed, ca. 1908, and may have remained exposed as late as the 1920s. A photograph of the Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, ca. 1930-

---

[50] Wilson, 30.

1955, shows the sanctuary walls devoid of any decoration. Another photograph from 1953 shows a completely different decorative scheme in the altar area. Therefore, the *trompe l'oeil* paintings in the altar area were most likely painted over sometime between 1910 and 1930. Significant sums of money were spent between 1924 and 1926, as indicated in St. Alphonsus' financial records. Although the records do not specify what the money was spent on other than "improvements on church", some of the expenses may have gone towards an extensive re-decorating of the church interior.[51] Laboratory analysis also dates the Period III paint layer to circa 1920-1930. (see Section 4.4.1 - Pigment Analysis)

CEILING

During the period of 1866 to 1908, the ceiling was decorated with the same figural scenes that adorn it today. The "frescoing" of the ceiling by the Italian artists Canova, Rossi and Perachi is documented in a September 6, 1866 article in *The New Orleans Times* and described in a subsequent article in the same newspaper, later that same year. As reported in *The New Orleans Times*, by November 30, 1866 "the scaffolding is taken down-the shell is broken-the swaddling clothes removed-and all these new creations stand out in relief"[52] The article continues with a wonderfully thorough description of the ceiling painting:

> The centre panel of the ceiling over the broad aisle of the church is pictured in the apotheosis of St. Alphonsus. It is a picture wholly ideal. The colors are life-like and of a remarkable brilliancy. St. Alphonsus is represented in the vestments of a Bishop, rising to heaven, and the holiness of a saint is limned upon the devout features. Angels surround his ascent, and he is welcomed by angelic chorus to his home in the "house not made with hands." The apotheosis is not original, the idea thereof being taken from an old design by a French artist. But the execution is admirable, and though we may not recognize in the delineations the perfect, the inspired touch of a genius, yet it is not too much to say the whole is well done.
> The panel next over the broad aisle is occupied with a delineation of Christ Ascending the Mount. The idea is also a copy from one of the executions of

[51] *St. Alphonsus Annual Report: Expenditures, Improvements on Church (1875-1904).* Years 1924-26.
[52] *The New Orleans Times.* November 30, 1866, p. 7.

> the Grand Masters, and is done with the same beauty which characterizes the panel of the apotheosis. The next is the Assumption, which we particularly described when finished, and the three panels form a series of groups that give rise to none but the highest ideas of beauty, of devotion and holiness, that lead the mind in an upward flight to conception of sainthood that is so well pictured in the limner's art.
> The panels on each side of the interior are filled each with a portrait of the thirteen apostles, the centre panel on the left being occupied with the picture of "Salvatore Mundi," the Saviour of the World. Christ and all his apostles are thus together in one group, while designs of the Munich School, affixed to the outer face of the gallery on each side, picture the passion of Our Lord, and teach all to strive to bear their cross.

This description accurately describes the ceiling paintings as they existed in 1866 and as they exist at present. While there has been some obvious damage to the paintings over the years and possibly some degree of re-painting, the figural paintings remain the only surviving element of this early decorative campaign. (See Figure 47) The paintings also represent the best surviving, documented work of Dominique Canova to exist in New Orleans.

The borders surrounding the figural scenes have most certainly been altered at least once. In the Packard and Butler lithograph and the photograph in Figure 12, the rectilinear panels surrounding the figural scenes appear to also be *trompe l'oeil.* These images demonstrate that the panels surrounding the figural scenes are painted in imitation of elaborate cast plaster work, similar to that which exists on the ribs of the church's ceiling and the surrounds of its apse doorways. This *trompe l'oeil* painting was most likely executed by the same hand as that which decorated the interior walls.

NAVE WINDOWS

During this period, spanning from 1866 to 1908, there were several significant changes made to the interior of St. Alphonsus. The extensive decorative painting discussed previously is just one of the many alterations that the church underwent. In 1888, an entire section of

the choir loft was cut back to accommodate the installation of new German stained glass windows. At this time the window openings were also altered, actually lengthened, to fit the new glass panels. The masonry below each of the round-headed windows was removed and rectangular pivoting windows, also made of stained glass, were installed.

The wood frames of these pivoting windows hold valuable information about the color which the window trim was painted in 1889, when the stained glass was installed. The first paint color found on the later window frames represents the paint color that existed on all window trim throughout the entire church interior at this time. (See Figures 21 and 22) *In situ* investigation and microscopic examination of samples removed from the frame of a pivoting window revealed two layers of gray painted directly on the wood. The same gray paint layers were found on samples removed from the sash of the large, round-headed stained glass windows. The vertical mullion separating the tall panels of stained glass is an original component of the window opening and, therefore, pre-dates the stained glass. The mullion contains paint layers prior to the gray found on the 1889 additions (also discussed in Section 4.3.1). Prior to the 1889 gray paint, the mullion has its original cream color and two pale gray paint layers. This evidence suggests that the window trim was painted gray throughout the entire Period II decorative scheme, prior to and after the installation of the German stained glass in 1889.

CORNICE

During this period of lavish interior finishes, the cornice embodied some of the most ostentatious decoration. Examining samples removed from the cornice, together with photographs from the period, provided a view of the ornate decorative scheme chosen for this significant element of the interior. The finishes scheme for the cornice during this period

of the church's history was similar to that of its original campaign, but with more decoration. Similar to its Period I decorative campaign, the cornice was painted with a pale neutral color and certain moldings were highlighted in metallic gold. During this period, the majority of the cornice was painted cream but the following moldings were covered with a metallic gold-colored bronzing powder: the egg-and-dart molding, the ovolo molding above the dentils, both acanthus leaf moldings, the bead-and-reel molding and the scrollwork of the brackets. It is this kind of decorative treatment that prompted James S. Zacherie, in his 1893 guide to New Orleans, to comment on "the profuse ornamentation, on which the painter and guilder have done their utmost."[53] The ornate, rich interior of Period II is a striking contrast to the simplistic, almost non-existent, decorative scheme of Period I. By the end of the nineteenth-century, St. Alphonsus had adopted the type of lavish ornamentation associated with churches of the period.

Three of the more simplistic moldings were also treated distinctly, with a strong dark color that contrasted with the metallic gold and cream color of the rest of the cornice. The ovolo moldings above and below the dentils and the fillet above the brackets were painted with a dark color, providing a series of prominent horizontal lines for the viewer's eye to follow. This treatment is particularly visible in the 1897 photograph of the altar area of St. Alphonsus, seen in Figure 11. Both the gilded elements and the dark bands served to draw attention to the cornice and the elaborately painted ceiling which it enframes. Unfortunately, the color of these dark bands is uncertain. Only one of these moldings was available for examination—the ovolo molding above the dentils. A very early dark red was found on this molding, suggesting that all three elements may have been painted this color. However, each of the three moldings would have to be investigated in order to determine with any certainty their color during Period II.

---

[53] Zacharie, 74.

FULL AND ENGAGED PLASTER COLUMNS

The second paint campaign found on several of the plaster columns throughout the church interior is a warm cream; the same cream as was found on the cornice. By mechanically scraping and removing the overpaint, the cream was revealed on columns in both the apse area and the nave. Samples removed from the columns also show this warm cream paint as the second layer, applied over the buff color of Period I. (See Figure 26) In addition, in the area investigated behind the side altar, the lower portion of an engaged column remains preserved, with its Period II finish exposed. Although the column is very soiled, its cream finish is clearly visible, applied to both the shaft and the base of the column. (See Figure 48)

Like the plaster cornice, the cast metal column capitals were also embellished with metallic finishes during this period. Samples removed from various elements of a capital contain an early metallic finish that is platy, thick and brownish-gold in color. (See Figure 28) The finish was found on all elements of the column capital. This metallic finish, as discussed previously in Section 4.3.1, appears to be a bronzing powder and not gold leaf, as was found on various plaster elements within the church. It may be that because of the nature of the metal substrate or perhaps the intricacy of the casting, a bronzing powder was used on the column capitals instead of gilding. This finish appears to have been applied at the beginning of Period I, as documented in the 1866 newspaper which mentions "gilded columns".[54] The presence of these metallic finishes is also evidenced by historic photographs, most notably the 1897 photograph of the apse-end of St. Alphonsus. In this image, the capitals are dark and have a reflective quality captured even in the black-and-white medium of the photograph. The capitals appear darker than the gilded elements of the cornice, indicating further that the metallic finishes on these two elements are inherently different.

---

[54] *The New Orleans Times*. September 9, 1866, p. 6.

CAST IRON COLUMNS

During this period, the cast iron columns remained grained. Their original finish was left on the columns until later in the period, when they were painted white and then cream towards the end of the period. (See Figure 30)

Fig. 48. St. Alphonsus Church. This photograph was taken of the portion of the engaged column behind the Sacred Heart altar. Its pre-1908 finish, a warm cream color, is preserved on the column. (Photograph by author)

BALCONY/CHOIR LOFT

Like the cast iron columns supporting it, the balcony choir loft retained its original grained finish at the start of Period II. However, later in this period, the choir loft received two very simple paint schemes. (See Figure 32) The colors used in these earlier paint schemes may reflect the colors in the original stations of the cross, which were replaced in the 1920s.[55] The first of these paint schemes, the balcony's second, consists of white and gold horizontal moldings with gray paneling. Paint samples removed from each of the balcony's moldings revealed that following the oak grained finish, the series of moldings below the hand rail were painted white. Two of these horizontal moldings, the raised beads, were picked out in gold leaf. As the most pronounced relief moldings on this part of the balcony front, these beads are highly visible. The gilded finish would have made them even more pronounced. During this campaign, the paneling of the choir loft was painted pale gray and white. The inset panel and the moldings surrounding it were painted pale gray, with the exception of the surround's wide central molding. This central, recessed molding around the panel was painted white. During both finish campaigns—the graining and the white, gold, gray treatment—the hand rail remained dark brown. As mentioned previously, the cast iron columns were also painted white during this period.

The third paint scheme to adorn the choir loft during Period II was also quite simple. This campaign consisted of cream and metallic gold. Every element, from the handrail to the paneling, was painted a creamy white. Two details—the upper bead of the horizontal molding and the outer molding of the panel surround— were highlighted in gold leaf. This decorative campaign coincides with the cast iron columns, which support the choir loft, being painted cream at the end of this period.

---

[55] Archives of the New Orleans Archdiocese. File entitled *St. Alphonsus Correspondence (185?-1929)*, letter dated January 10, 1920.

MAIN ENTRYWAY

Through the existing paint, one can see the silhouettes of early decorative painting on the walls and ceiling of the main entryway. However, because this area was not focused on during the current study, the paintings were not exposed. It is not known whether or not these paintings date from Period II, but it is highly likely. A small area on one of the piers between the entry and the nave was investigated and produced some information on paint treatments. As in the rest of the church, the plaster in this section of the church is integrally tinted a pinkish-tan color, which was visible during Period I. On top of the plaster, however, are two layers of a salmon colored paint, the first of which is paler than the other. These two layers, which represent this area's appearance during Period II, seem to have been applied at the same time. Whether the salmon color was part of a more involved decorative scheme is unclear. Exposures of the decorative paintings hidden below the present paint would have to be made to determine this area's Period II paint scheme in its entirety.

STAIRWELLS AND SIDE ENTRIES

During Period II, the walls of the stairwells and side entries were painted the same salmon as that found in the main entryway. This salmon was visible at the time of this study, exposed by the flaking off of subsequent paint layers. (See Figures 49 and 50) There is no evidence of any decorative painting on the walls of these secondary, functional spaces. The wall string and wainscot retained their original finishes of graining and a stain during Period II.

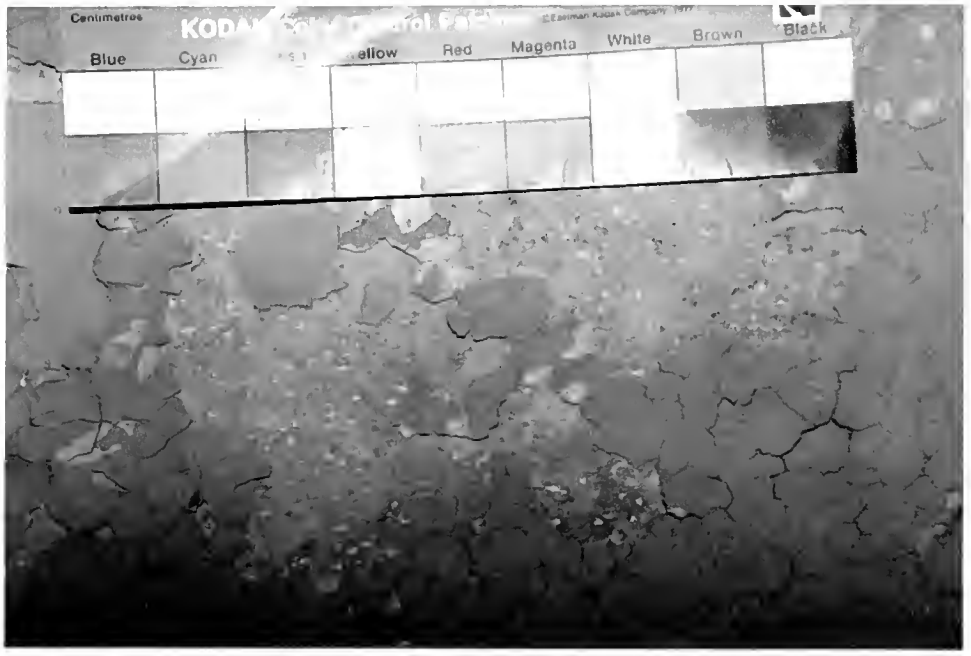


Fig. 49. St. Alphonsus Church. Peeling paint reveals the original salmon-colored finish on the wall of the east stairhall. (Photograph by author)

← Period II
(salmon finish)

Fig. 50 St. Alphonsus Church. This photomicrograph of sample #1E-17, removed the wall of the east stairhall, shows the early salmon finish applied to the walls of this space (at bottom). It is unclear whether or not decorative painting would also have adorned these side hallways. (Photograph by author)

4.3.3 Period III Surface Treatments (ca. 1920 - 1955)

SUMMARY OF PERIOD III

The *trompe l'oeil* and figural paintings executed in the mid-nineteenth century adorned the interior of St. Alphonsus for decades. However, in the early part of the twentieth century, the church's decorative scheme was drastically changed. During this time, the color palette and decorative program became Romanesque or Late Victorian Gothic in style. The colors of this period are dark and earthy colors—maroon, dark green and yellow ochre—while the decoration itself involved stenciling and crude imitative painting on every element of the interior. These somber colors were often highlighted with a metallic gold finish, found on a variety of elements of the interior during this period. Interestingly, the figural paintings on the ceiling were not touched during this period, but remained in striking contrast to the stenciling and as a reminder of the church's previous decorative campaign.

Exactly when this campaign was executed remains unclear. However, archival research and laboratory analysis suggest the stenciling was done sometime between 1920 and 1953. A photograph from a newspaper article dated May 17, 1908 shows the *trompe l'oeil* paneling still in place in the altar area. So, the stenciling must have been installed some time after 1908, possibly in the 1920s when large sums of money were spent on "improvements" to the church. As previously mentioned, approximately $80,000 was spent on St. Alphonsus between 1924 and 1925. Although the records do not specify what the money was spent on, it is possible the money went towards an extensive re-decorating of the church interior. Laboratory analysis of the Period III paint layer also dates it to some time around or after 1920, based on the pigments used. (See Section 4.4.1 - Pigment Analysis)

This period ends with the re-painting of the church by Conrad Schmitt Studios in 1955. Unfortunately, research turned up only one image of the interior of St. Alphonsus

during this period. The majority of information concerning the church interior during this period was found through *in situ* investigation and physical evidence. However, additional archival research and the memory of parishioners may yield valuable information on this part of St. Alphonsus' recent past.

ALTAR AREA AND SANCTUARY

Examination of the physical fabric of the altar area, as well as a photograph dated 1953, suggests this area received two different finish treatments during Period III. Removal of layers of overpaint on the walls of the apse revealed dark green and bronze-brown decorative painting in the form of panels. The historic photograph, however, contains a strikingly different design in the same area. Ironically, the decorative finish visible in the photograph was not found on the wall and the green-brown painting found on the wall is not visible in any historical photographs. This discrepancy suggests that there were actually two different finish treatments for the altar area during this period, the first of which was the brown and dark green decorative painting.

Evidence of the green and brown decorative painting was only found *in situ*, through the removal of overpaint. (See Figures 51 and 52) Scraping away at more recent paint layers revealed a bronze-brown paint layer with haphazardly placed short, dark green lines. There is also evidence of a black or dark green border adjacent to this design. Only a small portion of this decorative painting was revealed and what was uncovered is most likely part of a larger decorative scheme for the entire wall, possibly a series of painted panels of marble. The colors and manner in which the design is painted suggest this finish is intended to resemble marble, although crudely executed. All of the decorative painting associated with Period III is somewhat primitive in skill and technique, and this brown and green "marbling"

Fig. 51. St. Alphonsus Church. The east wall of the apse was the site of several exposure windows, created by the author in an attempt to find the various campaigns of decorative painting. The small exposure at the top of the photograph revealed a type of crude marbling, attributed to Period III (Photograph by author)

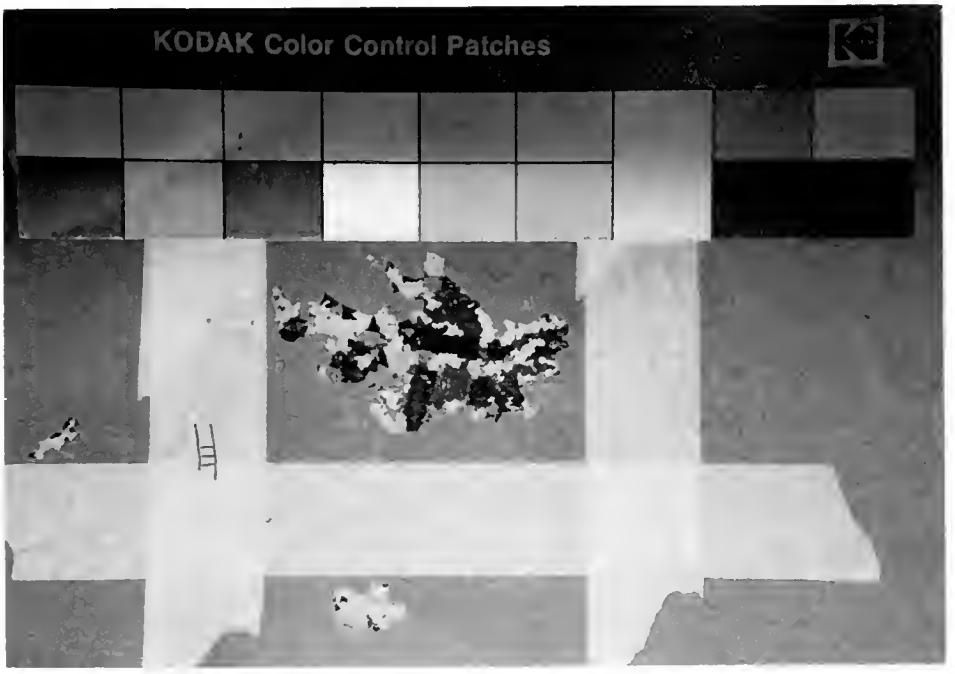


Fig. 52. St. Alphonsus Church. A detail of the crude brown and green marbling exposed in the altar area, on the east wall of the apse. (Photograph by author)

may be an example of this period's craftsmanship. However, lack of historical documentation prevents us from knowing exactly when this brown and green finish was applied to the wall. It is possible it was instituted around the turn of the century, at the end of Period II. But as its appearance suggests, it was most likely part of this more modern design. Either way, it appears that the apse's general decorative scheme from Period II was preserved—panels of marbling—but the color and style of the imitative painting was altered to fit a new twentieth century interior design.

The 1953 photograph of the altar shows an entirely different design scheme for the altar area. (See Figures 53 and 54) In the photograph, a repeating scroll pattern surrounds the doors to the sacristies. The repeat gives way to an explosion of intertwined foliage at the top of the door surround that extends along the statuary niche above. From the photograph it is clear that this ornamentation is most likely a stencil design. Although stenciling is found throughout the church interior during Period III, this particular pattern is different; it is floral, organic, almost lacy. The other stencil designs discovered from this period are more simplistic and geometric, Romanesque in inspiration. The stencil depicted in the photograph belongs to a different style of ornamentation, suggesting that the altar area, as the most prominent space in the church, received an additional decorative campaign prior to the re-painting executed by Conrad Schmitt Studios in 1955.

Fig. 53. St. Alphonsus Church. This photograph of the altar area, taken in 1953, shows a scrolled floral pattern on the walls. Other than this photograph, no evidence of this painting was found in this study. (Photograph courtesy of The Friends of St. Alphonsus)

Fig. 54. St. Alphonsus Church. Detail of the 1953 photograph, showing the scroll pattern and intertwined foliage around the apse door. (Photograph courtesy of the Friends of St. Alphonsus)

The plaster door surrounds and reveals of the openings between the altar area and the sacristies were also examined. During Period III, it appears that these areas were painted a variety of browns and greens, in keeping with the overall color scheme of the apse. (See Figure 38) While a few elements were finished in metallic gold, the majority of these relief moldings were painted in the same dark earth-tones as seen throughout the entire church interior during this period. The guilloche pattern of the door reveal was painted entirely with pale brown, including the wood element that had previously been grained. Only the petals of the repeating rosettes were treated differently. They were painted with a metallic gold.

The door surround, on the other hand, had each of its moldings painted differently, reinforcing the sense of polychromy throughout the church interior. The bead along the inside of the opening was painted dark brown, while the fillet next to it was painted a yellow-brown (close to an ochre). The central, flat molding was painted cream and the flat band at the edge was painted pale brown. The large acanthus leaf molding was painted dark green. Only the bead-and-reel molding and small acanthus leaf molding were treated with a metallic gold finish. Although depicting what is believed to be a later decorative campaign, the 1953 photograph supports some of this evidence. In the photograph, while the majority of the door surround appears to be a pale color, the bead-and-reel and small acanthus leaf moldings still appear to be painted with a metallic finish.

NAVE WALLS

Microscopic analysis and *in situ* investigation revealed stenciling on the walls of the nave. While the stenciling appears to be quite extensive, only select portions of it were uncovered within the church—namely on the second floor level and in the entry. Although the patterns of these wall stencils may vary, their colors remain consistent—cream and brown.

A fairly illustrative area of stenciling was uncovered on the second floor level of the church through a number of "windows", created by the removal of overpaint. Paint removal exposed stenciling in several locations in this portion of the east interior wall. (See Figures 55 through 57) In the area above the chair rail, the exposed stenciling is comprised of a repeating sunburst pattern. The pale brown sunbursts, which occur in regular intervals every two to three inches, are applied over a cream background. These stencils appear to extend up the wall to the cornice, although the exposure windows were only executed approximately six feet from the choir loft floor level. Below the chair rail, no evidence of stenciling was found. Instead, this portion of the wall appears to have been treated with a solid color. It was painted a solid pale brown that appears to match the brown of the stenciling above.

This stencil campaign is easily identified in the cross-sections of the paint samples removed from the nave walls. (See Figure 58) All of these wall samples contain a distinct cream and brown finish, just under the present gray paint. This finish has a cream ground coat and a thin brown finish coat. In some samples, the brown top layer is missing or only partially present, suggesting a pattern of painted designs. (See Figure 59) The samples, which were removed from both the east and west walls and from the first and second floor levels, all contain the distinct stenciling campaign; suggesting that some type of stenciling covered all of the nave's wall surfaces. Although no exposure windows were created on the first floor level or the west wall, samples from these areas indicate that cream and brown colored stenciling is present, possibly in the same sunburst pattern.

Fig. 55. St. Alphonsus Church. In an area on the second floor level of the east wall, over paint was removed to reveal some of the stenciling of Period III. The stenciling in this area is comprised of a repeating sunburst pattern. (Photograph by author)

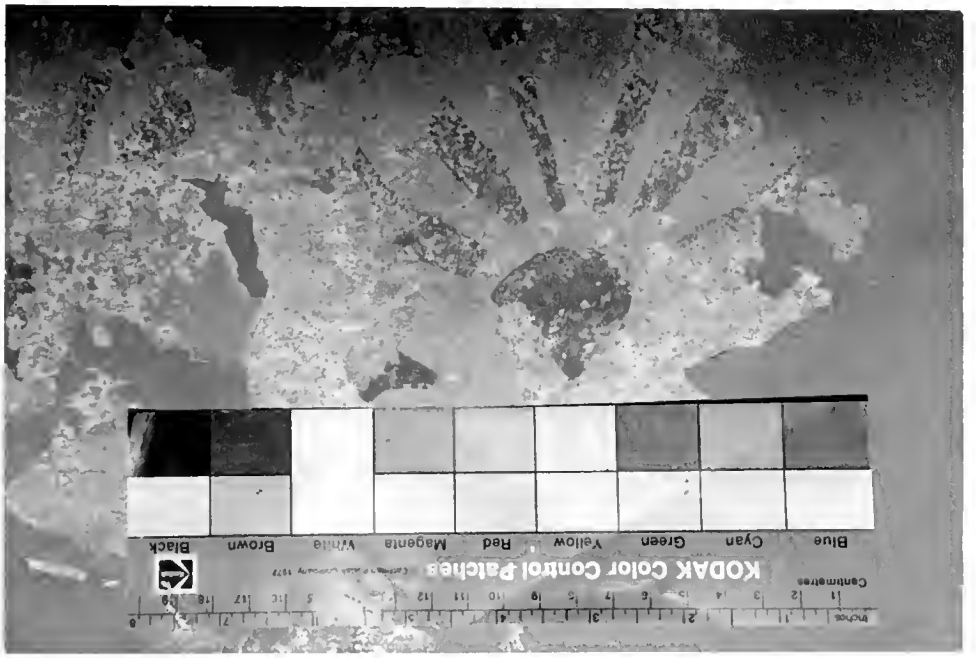


Fig. 56. St. Alphonsus Church. A detail of one of the sunburst-pattern wall stencils uncovered on the second floor level of the east wall of the nave. The brown sunbursts repeat every two to three inches. (Photograph by author)

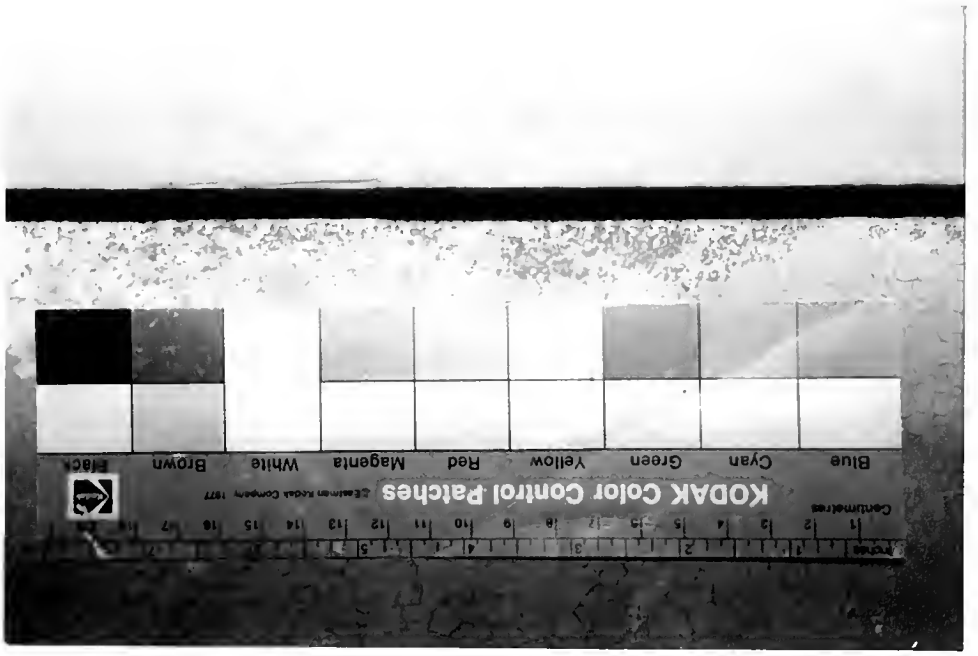


Fig. 57. St. Alphonsus Church. In the same portion of the east wall, the area below the chair rail was treated with a solid, brown color (the same color as the sunburst stencils). (Photograph by author)

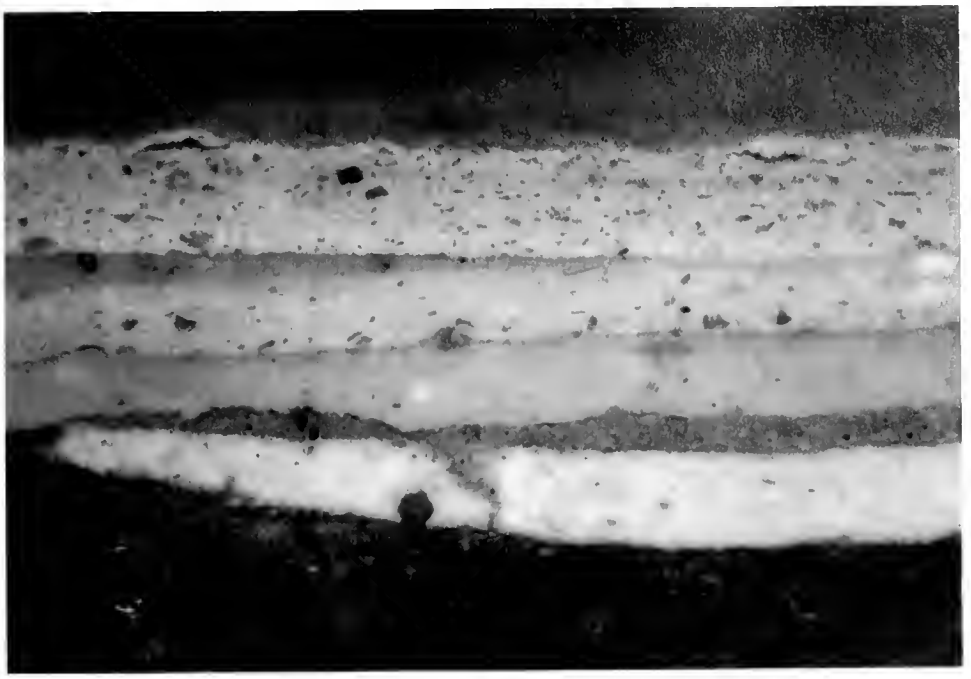


Fig. 58. St. Alphonsus Church. This photomicrograph of sample #2E-10, removed from the wall in the same area as where the stenciling was exposed, clearly illustrates the stencil layer in cross-section. The pale brown layer over a cream ground coat, towards the top of the sample, tapers off towards the center of the photograph. This partial brown line represents the edge of a stencil design. 10x magnification. (Photograph by author)

Fig. 59. St. Alphonsus. Although no exposures were made on the first floor level of the nave, samples removed from the walls contain the same stencil layer as in Figure 58. The distinct layering sequence of a thick cream ground topped by a thin brown finish is visible in this photomicrograph. The brown in this photograph appears as though it may be darker than that of the sunburst pattern on the second floor level. 10x magnification (Photograph by author)

CEILING

As mentioned previously, the ceiling retained the figural paintings from Period II during this third decorative campaign. However, the borders and frames of the figural paintings may have been altered to better suit the new color scheme. In fact, these borders may have been painted with patterns similar to the stencil designs found on the church's walls. As the ceiling was not investigated in this study, how the border designs were treated at this time is not known.

NAVE WINDOWS

In a clear switch from previous paint schemes, the window trim was painted brown during this twentieth century period. What was previously painted gray—the sash, mullions and frames—were painted dark brown during this period. (See Figures 21 and 22) This dark brown color would have been in keeping with the dark, earthy colors of this period.

It should also be noted that decorative painting from this period was found on the window reveals at the second floor level. In these areas, two different stencil designs were found. The inner reveal (the portion of the reveal closest to the sash) was found to have a painted lattice design. (See Figure 60) The design was executed in pale brown over a cream background, in what appears to be the same color scheme as was used for the sunburst-pattern wall stencil. The outer portion of the reveal (the area closer to the nave) was painted with a green design whose pattern could not be deciphered. (See Figure 61) The design, which appears to be some sort of abstract leaf pattern, was executed in green over a pale green background. The darker green appears to be the same green used elsewhere in the decorative painting of this period. Unfortunately, the difficulty in removing the overpaint prevented this design from being fully exposed.

Fig. 60. St. Alphonsus Church. Another stencil design was uncovered on the east wall of the nave, at the second floor level. This brown and cream colored lattice design was found on the inner reveal of a window opening. It appears to utilize the same colors as the sunburst pattern. (Photograph by author)

Fig. 61. St. Alphonsus Church. An additional stencil design was found on the outer portion of the same window reveal. It was executed in dark green and cream, but the exact design could not be identified. (Photograph by author)

CORNICE

Unfortunately, the finishes for the cornice during this period are not particularly legible. The bronzing powder of the metallic finish applied to the cornice during Period II has become oxidized over the years. The corrosion from this layer has pushed its way through subsequent finishes, disrupting the layering sequence and discoloring the later paint. For instance, it is unclear, in some samples viewed under the microscope, whether or not there was a dark green paint layer on the cornice during this period or if the green finish is actually the corrosion product from the oxidized metallic finish. In many samples removed from the cornice, there are tan and cream layers directly below the present finish, but it seems unlikely during this period of high embellishment that the cornice would have had such a simple, neutral paint scheme. Additional investigation is needed of the cornice, preferably in an area of intact cornice, to determine the finishes of this period.

FULL AND ENGAGED PLASTER COLUMNS

The plaster columns received one of the most ornate treatments of this period. All of the columns in the church interior were treated with a repeating, polychromatic chevron pattern and topped with a metallic gold capital. The chevron pattern was limited to the fluting of the shaft, but was placed on every flute of every column. The shaft of each column appears to have been painted entirely with a yellow-brown color (essentially an ochre color), then the raised portion of the fluting was painted with a triangular chevron design in dark green, maroon and metallic gold. The recessed channels in between the fluting were left a solid ochre color; as was the reeding at the base of the column shafts on the second floor level. This chevron pattern was found on all of the full and engaged columns throughout the

Fig. 62. St. Alphonsus Church. The base of an engaged column on the second floor level of the church, with areas of the Period III chevron pattern exposed on the flutes. The recessed area between the flutes, as well as the reeding at the bottom of the column, was treated with a solid ochre color. (Photograph by author)

Fig. 63. St. Alphonsus Church. A detail of the chevron pattern applied to the fluting of the plaster columns in Period III. The pattern is composed of an ochre-colored background with green, brown, maroon and metallic gold chevrons painted over it. (Photograph by author)

Fig. 64. St. Alphonsus Church. Removal of the present paint revealed the ochre-colored finish applied to the reeding at the base of the columns during Period III. This color also served as the background for the chevron pattern on the flutes. (Photograph by author)

church—in the apse area, on the first and second floor level of the nave, and in the front entry. (See Figures 62 through 64 and Figure 26)

The capitals of the columns were painted entirely with a metallic gold finish. While at the first floor level, the column bases were painted a combination of pale brown and metallic gold. The four flat bands wrapping around the bases were highlighted in gold, separating the brown, rounded moldings that comprise the base. One can only imagine how the interior of St. Alphonsus would have looked with the chevron design and gold on all of its columns, stenciling on its walls and the figural paintings from decades earlier on its ceiling.

CAST IRON COLUMNS

The free-standing cast iron columns, which were previously painted in imitation of wood, received another faux finish during this period. During Period III, these columns were painted in imitation of marble. The marbling, which was executed in a simplistic manner, employed an ochre background with swirls of maroon, cream and brown painted on top. (See Figures 65 and 30) Again, the same color scheme is utilized in the decorative painting of this period. It is interesting to compare the marbling found on these columns with the marbling found on the apse walls during Period II, as depicted in the historic photographs. The marbling of Period II was of a much higher caliber and executed by a trained hand, while this marbling is much more crude—less realistic. This comparison brings to light another important difference between these two decorative campaigns. Not only were the decorative schemes incredibly different, but so was the manner of execution and degree of skill involved in their creation.

Fig. 65. St. Alphonsus Church. During Period III, the cast iron columns supporting the choir loft were marbled. As demonstrated in this photograph, the marbling was executed in a simplistic manner, with swirls of maroon, cream and brown painted on top of an ochre-colored background. (Photograph by author)

BALCONY/CHOIR LOFT

During this period of lavish decoration, the balcony front was painted with metallic gold and gray. (See Figure 32) The design scheme for the balcony during this period involved a significant amount of the metallic finish; more so than in previous campaigns. For instance, the balcony's inset panel and surrounding moldings were painted with a metallic gold (what appears to be a bronzing powder). In addition, the two beaded moldings directly below the handrail were painted gold. The remaining moldings, including the flat area into which the panels are set and the additional horizontal moldings below the handrail, were painted gray. The handrail was painted black.

MAIN ENTRYWAY

A portion of the east wall of the entrance was investigated for evidence of the stenciling found elsewhere in the church nave. A small exposure window was created, carefully removing the present campaign of paint. The window revealed brown stenciling on a cream background. The colors of this campaign appear to be the same as the stenciling found on the second floor level, as does the pattern. Although only a small portion of the design was uncovered, what appear to be the rays of the sunburst pattern are clearly visible. (See Figures 66 and 67)

STAIRWELLS AND SIDE ENTRIES

When the walls of the side entries and stairwells were examined, only a cream layer could be attributed to Period III. (See Figure 50) This cream layer may be the background of a stencil design, as was found elsewhere in the church interior. Or the walls in these secondary areas may have been painted with solid cream. Further investigation, including removal of the present overpaint, would be necessary to determine if this space was treated decoratively.

Fig. 66. St. Alphonsus Church. The portion of the east wall of the main entry where several exposures were made to reveal earlier paint finishes. (Photograph by author)

Fig. 67. St. Alphonsus Church. This photograph shows a detail of the Period III stencil found on the east wall of the main entry. The brown-colored rays of the sunburst pattern (which was also found on the second floor level walls) are just visible. (Photograph by author)

4.3.4 Period IV Surface Treatments (1955 - Present)

SUMMARY OF PERIOD IV

After Period III's ornate stenciling campaign, the church returned to a much simpler, monochromatic decorative scheme in 1955. A proposal by Conrad Schmitt Studios dated January 21, 1955 documents the work that was eventually carried out by the decorative painting company later that year. The description of work outlined in the letter describes the interior as it existed at the time of this study. The walls, columns, and altar area were returned to neutral 'drab' colors, with minimal gilding and polychromy—most likely a reaction to the lavish stenciling campaign that it was replacing. The ceiling paintings were also partially re-painted during this period.[56] The color scheme of this period harks back to that of Period II, although the earlier decorative campaign was much richer with its palette of warm colors and its complex artistic endeavors.

ALTAR AREA AND SANCTUARY

The walls of the apse and sanctuary, like the walls elsewhere in the church, are painted a gray-green, what Conrad Schmitt Studios referred to as "Caen stone". The plaster door surrounds are painted the same color.

NAVE WALLS

The nave walls are also painted gray-green, with no additional embellishment.

---

[56] Bernard O. Gruenke, Conrad Schmitt Studios. Letter to Rev. Paul J. Beaudry, C.S.S.R, January 21, 1955.

CEILING

As outlined in the 1955 proposal, the ceiling was slated to be cleaned and partially re-painted. The proposal letter states that "all existing murals to be thoroughly cleaned, retouched where necessary and revarnished with a soft non-yellow matt varnish."[57] In addition, the ceiling background was to be painted "a pale parchment tone, using a deeper shade with spots of color for the bordered areas next to the murals."[58] In actuality, the borders surrounding the figural paintings are painted with two different shades of pink, yellow, metallic gold and a pale gray-blue. While the patterns of the ceiling borders executed by Conrad Schmitt appear to be based on the original border designs, they are much more simple and flat. The Conrad Schmitt designs employ simplistic geometric repeats in their borders, whereas those executed in 1866 are three-dimensional in nature—imitating elaborate cast plaster work. The 1955 work picks up on the patterns of this earlier paint work, but immensely simplifies it. Although the physical paint history of the ceiling was not examined in this study, it is suspected that the original 1866 paint campaign (figural paintings and surrounding borders) was not painted over until 1955. While the alterations to the border areas are clear, the extent to which the figural paintings were "touched up" or modified is unclear.

NAVE WINDOWS

Presently, the windows are painted the same gray-green color as the walls. The reveals are painted with a rich, deep red band with a gold stripe down its center. In the apse area, the lack of a pronounced reveal causes the red and gold band to be painted on the wall surrounding the windows.

---

[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.

CORNICE

The cornice is painted a paler version of the wall color—a " pale bone tone."[59] Various elements of the cornice are picked out in colors used elsewhere in the church interior by Conrad Schmitt. The flat moldings above the brackets and large egg-and-dart moldings are painted the same pale blue as is found on the ceiling. The area behind the dentils is painted the same deep red as is used around the windows. And the wide flat band below the dentils is painted a dark pink color, what Conrad Schmitt calls a "terra cotta tone". There is minimal giltwork on the cornice during this phase. Only small areas on the front of the brackets are highlighted in gold.

FULL AND ENGAGED PLASTER COLUMNS

All columns in the interior of St. Alphonsus are painted the same "pale bone" color as the cornice. The contrast between the walls and the columns and cornice is very subtle, especially with years of accumulated soiling. The capitals are also painted the bone color, with some polychromy. The background of the capital (the area directly below the abacus) is painted deep red and dark pink, colors seen elsewhere in the church. The tips of the acanthus leaves as well as the abacus and the raised fillet at the base of the capital are highlighted with small amounts of gold.

[59] Ibid.

CAST IRON COLUMNS

The cast iron columns are painted the same bone color as the plaster columns. The Doric capitals are also polychromed. Like the larger columns, the area beneath the abacus is painted deep red. The rounded echinus element is treated with gold leaf while the neck of the capital is painted dark gray.

BALCONY/CHOIR LOFT

The balcony front received the same type of subdued polychromy as the column capitals and cornice. As stated in the 1955 proposal letter, the balcony front was "to be painted in a similar tone [as the capitals and cornice], however using a deeper shade, introducing a pale terra cotta where necessary to silhouette against the wall". The majority of the balcony front is painted the pale bone color, but its panels and some of the horizontal moldings at the top and bottom are painted the same stone color as the walls. In addition, three moldings are picked out in pink (most likely the pale terra cotta color referred to in the 1955 letter). These pink moldings are located at the top and bottom of the balcony (in the series of horizontal moldings that run across the front) and along the outside of each of its recessed panels.

MAIN ENTRYWAY

The walls of the main entry are painted the same gray "Caen stone color" as the rest of the church interior. The columns are painted the paler bone color.

STAIRWELLS AND SIDE ENTRIES

The walls of the side stairwells are painted the same gray "Caen stone color" as the rest of the church interior.

4.4 Chemical Analysis of Selected Finishes

Representative finish layers from each of the four periods of interior decoration were further examined in the laboratory in order to identify their principal components. The finishes of Periods I and III were analyzed for pigment composition. In the case of the tinted plaster associated with Period I, an attempt was made to identify the pigments used to color the plaster. And with the Period III stencil layer, its pigments were examined in order to help date the paint layer. The painted finishes of Periods II, III and IV were also analyzed for information relating to their binding media. The more that is known about a finish's make-up, be it plaster or a paint, the better the overall picture of that finish's original appearance. In addition, knowledge of a finish's constituent components can often aid in understanding how the layer ages and how best to conserve it.

Of course, knowing the various pigments used in a particular finish layer can lead to an understanding of the finish's appearance. But identification of the paint binding media can also aid in determining its appearance, as well as shed light on the techniques and preferences of the artist who executed the work. Every paint medium has a characteristic appearance and qualities that can be attributed to it. For instance, distemper paints, which are typically made from animal hide glue, have a very matte appearance. Whereas, traditional linseed oil-based paints have a glossy, ropy appearance. In addition, each paint medium ages in a different manner. The aging process can often affect the color and the condition of the paint layer, sometimes even disturbing the paint layer strata. Understanding the paint medium can often aid in determining the causes of paint failure, as well as the solution. Most importantly, media identification helps us to perceive and replicate historic painted finishes.

A variety of analytical techniques can be used to identify the pigments and media of a paint film. Typically, the simplest techniques are used first in order to narrow down the

possible types of pigments and media that could be present in the paint. Subsequent testing, often involving polarized light microscopy and higher analytical techniques such as Scanning Electron Microscopy and Energy Dispersion Spectroscopy (SEM/EDS) or Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR), are used in order to yield more conclusive results. For this study, a combination of simple and in-depth analytical techniques were used to find out more about the finishes associated with each of the four principal periods of St. Alphonsus' interior decoration. (See Appendix D - Finishes Analyses Data)

4.4.1 Pigment Analysis

SEM/EDS was used to perform elemental analysis of two of the historic interior finishes at St. Alphonsus. Both the tinted plaster of Period I and the stencil layer of Period III were examined using these analytical techniques in order to identify the pigment(s) used in each of these layers. Identification of the pigments in these key paint layers can help us to understand not only the composition and appearance of a finish, but also potentially date paint layers. Because certain pigments have known dates of introduction during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, their presence can help establish possible dates for particular paint layers.

Elemental analysis through SEM/EDS of the tinted plaster (Sample # 1N-17) revealed that the finish is composed of the following: calcium, carbon, silicon, magnesium, aluminum and lead. (See Figures 68 and 69) The first five elements listed can be attributed to the chemical composition of plaster: calcium carbonate constitutes lime; silica is the main component of sand; aluminum is the principal ingredient in the clay, alumina, that is often found in lime and cements; and magnesium is often found in lime that is "dolomitic", or contains magnesium carbonate. All of these elements are common constituents of lime-based plasters. The illustrative EDS elemental mapping in Figure 69 demonstrates the location of the various elements in a given area. The mapping shows the heavy presence of silica where there are sand grains and the presence of calcium in the area between the sand grains.

The only element found in this sample that can not be attributed to the plaster is lead. It is this lead, in the form of red lead, that appears to be the pigment used for coloring the plaster. Red lead (or tetroxide of lead), which is bright scarlet in color, has been used as a pigment for hundreds of years. Its use as a tinting agent for plaster was also prevalent in the nineteenth century, and probably before. As stated in Millar's *Plastering Plain and Decorative: A Practical Treatise on the Art and Craft of Plastering and Modeling*, stucco and

interior plaster can be tinted by "mixing in the lime various oxides...litharge, or the red oxide of lead."[60] Millar, who wrote in 1897, specifically recommends using red lead as a pigment for tinting plaster.

Elemental analysis of the Period III stencil layer was also very illustrative. Paint sample #1E-16, removed from the east wall of the nave, contains a well-defined layer of the stenciled finish. Through SEM/EDS, the composition of the stencil layer was revealed. (See Figure 70) In addition to other elements, the stenciling contains: titanium, zinc, barium and sulfur. The presence of these elements is of particular significance because it points to the use of a "titanated lithopone" in the paint. Titanated lithopone is a white pigment that has been widely in use since the early part of the twentieth century. It is made of lithopone (zinc sulphide and barium sulphate) combined with a small percentage of titanium white (titanium oxide).[61] Titanium white was added to the lithipone to compensate for its tendency to darken when exposed to light. The significance of the presence of the titanated lithipone is that it provides an approximate date for the stencil layer. Titanium white was not introduced commercially to the United States until 1916-1919. So, its presence in a paint dates it to sometime after 1920. Based on this finding as well as the archival evidence discussed in Section 4.3.3, the stenciling at St. Alphonsus was most likely executed in the 1920s or 1930s.

[60] Millar, 104.
[61] Gettens and Stout, 125.

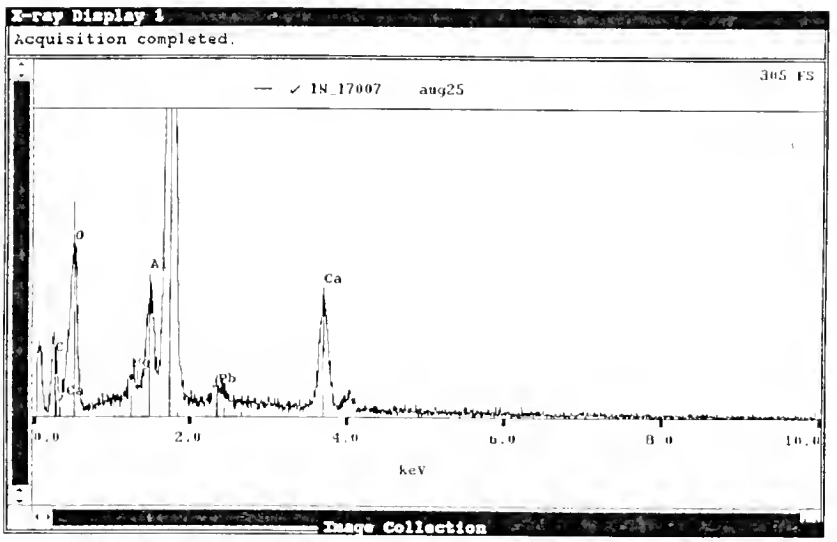


Fig. 68. St. Alphonsus Church. The chemical composition of the tinted plaster at St. Alphonsus (Sample #1N-17), as determined through SEM/EDS analysis. The above graph displays the various elements present in the plaster, including lead. The presence of lead can most likely be attributed to the use of red lead to tint the plaster. (Graph courtesy of Laboratory for Research on the Structure of Matter, University of Pennsylvania)

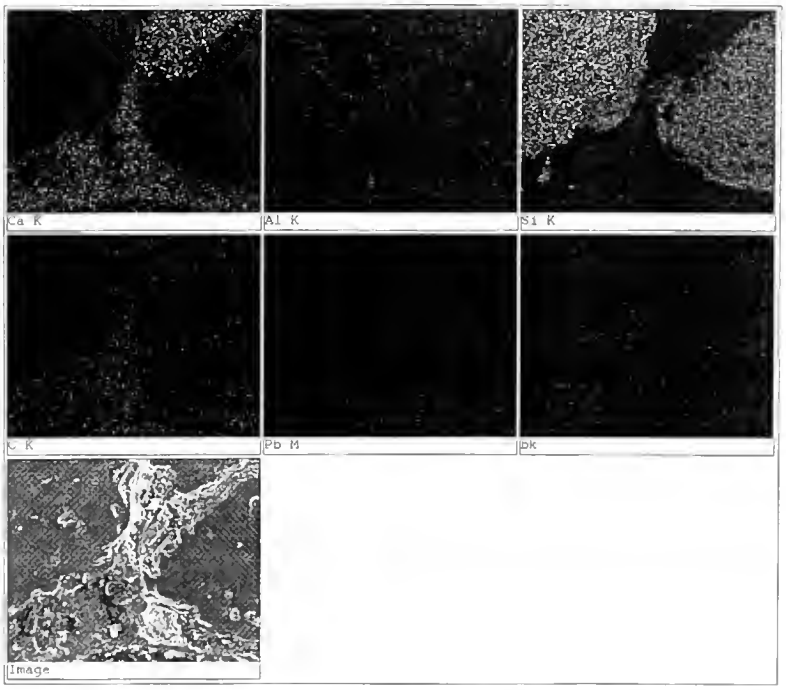


Fig. 69. St. Alphonsus Church. The above mapping shows the location of specific elements within the tinted plaster sample, #1N-17 (the actual image of the sample can be seen in the bottom left corner). As expected, the element silica is concentrated where there are grains of sand and calcium is concentrated in between the sand (where the lime matrix of the plaster exists). The lead appears to be distributed throughout the plaster, but has a slightly heavier presence in the lime matrix between the grains of sand. (Image courtesy of Laboratory for Research on the Structure of Matter, University of Pennsylvania)

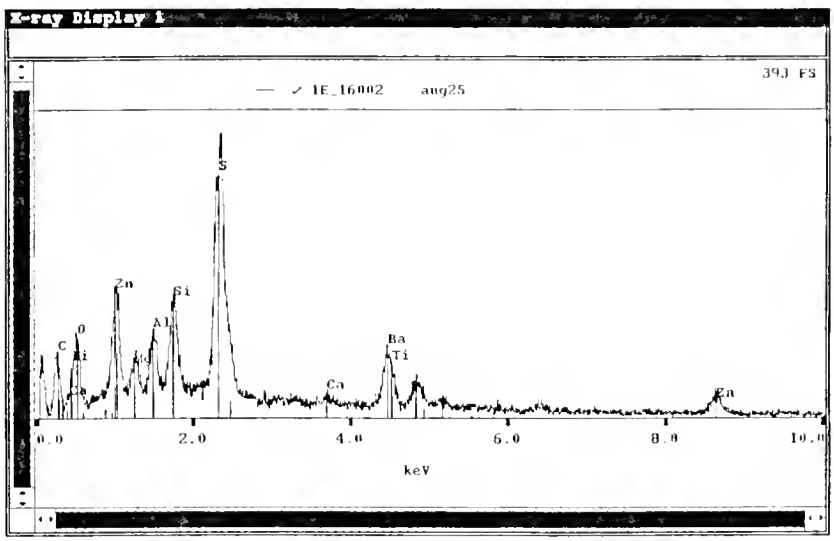


Fig. 70. St. Alphonsus Church. The above graph shows the elemental composition of the Period III stencil layer present in Sample #1E-16, which was removed from the flute of an engaged column. The stencil layer contains titanium, zinc, barium and sulfur, suggesting the use of a white, titanated lithopone pigment. The presence of this pigment is of particular significance because it dates the paint layer to some time after 1920, when the pigment was commercially introduced to the United States. (Graph courtesy of Laboratory for Research on the Structure of Matter, University of Pennsylvania)

4.4.2 Media Analysis[62]

SOLUBILITY TESTS

In order to determine the media of each of the three paint campaigns found at St. Alphonsus, a cursory testing program of solubility tests was initially employed. In this testing program, representative paint layers from Periods II, III and IV were exposed to a range of solvents. Each solvent is known to solubilize a certain type of paint. For this series of tests, the following solvents were used: distilled water; ethyl alcohol; acetone; methylene chloride; and ammonium hydroxide. Solubility in warmed distilled water suggests the paint's binding media is based either on protein (such as animal hide glue) or plant gum.[63] Solubility in ethyl alcohol suggests the presence of a natural resin, such as dammar, shellac or mastic.[64] Acetone and methylene chloride are both known to solubilize linseed oil-based paints. Milk-based paint, known as casein, is susceptible to strong alkalis and would therefore show signs of dissolution when exposed to ammonium hydroxide.[65] Using the solvents as established references, each of the three principal paint layers was tested for solubility—the *trompe l'oeil* paint layer of Period II, the stencil layer of Period III, and the Conrad Schmitt layer of Period IV.

Each of the paint layers was isolated and crushed with a glass rod. A portion of the powdered sample was then placed on five glass microslides, along with each of the solvents. In addition, the microslides which contained the water and the alcohol solvents were placed on a hot plate, set on low, to facilitate dissolution and drying. After combining the paint film with the various solvents, the solution on each of the microslides was allowed to dry and the

---

[62] Analysis of the media was performed by Dorothy Krotzer in conjunction with architectural conservator, Catherine S. Myers. Much of the information in this section, including the interpretation of results, is derived from the analytical session performed with Myers.
[63] Gettens and Stout, 28-29.
[64] Ibid, 204-205
[65] Ibid, 7-8.

results were observed under the microscope in transmitted light. Any evidence of reformation of the paint film indicates that the paint layer is soluble in a particular solvent, and would point to the presence of a certain binding medium.

There are, however, limitations to this type of media analysis. Generally, as a paint film ages, its degree of insolubility increases, making the effectiveness of solubility tests difficult. In addition, aged paint films may not contain much of their original media, which may have been lost over time due to exposure to dampness, salts, sunlight or biological growth. And, of course, interpreting the results of the tests can be difficult. Nonetheless, the information gathered from the solubility tests is helpful in eliminating options and focusing further media analysis. The results of the solubility tests performed for this study are discussed below.

The first finish to be tested was the *trompe l'oeil* painting of Period II. Unfortunately, this aged layer is very fragile and may not contain much of its original binding media. In addition, there appears to be a high percentage of pigment in relation to the binding medium. This skewed proportion may be a factor of the original pigment-to-medium ratio, or it may be due to loss of the medium over time. Either way, the amount of existing media is very low. When exposed to the array of solvents, the *trompe l'oeil* paint layer was found to be insoluble in acetone and methylene chloride, eliminating the possibility of this painting being oil-based. The layer was, however, partially soluble in *two* of the solvents—the distilled water and the ethyl alcohol.

Partial solubility and reformation of a film in two solvents points to a possible mixed medium. Solubility in warm water obviously suggests that the paint is water-based, most likely a glue-based distemper paint. Solubility in alcohol, however, indicates the presence of a resin, possibly added to the distemper to increase its strength and durability. Historical

accounts suggest supplementing the glue binder of distemper paints with a variety of materials. In *The Expert Calciminer* (1920), author Ashmun Kelly provides a list of recommended substances to be used in water paints to bind the paint film and give it body and durability. This list of binders includes glue and gelatin, of course, but also includes the following: casein, flour, starch, molasses, gum tragacanth, sugar and gum shellac.[66] Kelly also cites a recipe for "a flat, washable water paint" that calls for the addition of either white shellac or copal varnish to a glue-based distemper paint.[67] The information provided in Kelly's book demonstrates that, historically, a wide range of materials have been added to distemper paints to increase performance and durability. Which additive was used by the artists who executed the *trompe l'oeil* painting at St. Alphonsus is unknown. However, the painting's partial solubility in alcohol points to the presence of a resin such as shellac, copal or rosin.[68]

Unfortunately, the solubility tests performed during the course of this study yield only approximate results. They suggest the presence of both a protein and a resin, but without identifying with any certainty *which* type. Higher analytical methods would have to be undertaken in order to achieve more specific qualitative answers regarding the media of this particular finish.

The paint layer involving the stencil decoration was exposed to the same testing program, but with the addition of an alkaline solvent (ammonium hydroxide). The stencil layer does not appear to be completely soluble in any of the solvents. It was insoluble in the alcohol, acetone and the methylene chloride and was only partially soluble in the ammonium hydroxide. In addition, when hot water was added to the paint film, it did not show signs of

---

[66] A. Ashmun Kelly. *The Expert Calciminer. A Complete Working Manual for Interior Decorators*, 2nd edition. A. Ashmun Kelly, 1920, p. 90.
[67] Ibid, 67-68.
[68] Gettens and Stout, 204.

solubilizing but did appear to swell slightly. The results of the solubility tests suggest that the stenciling was executed using a water-based paint that is affected by alkalis, namely a casein. Casein is another protein-based binding medium for paint that is prepared by heating skimmed milk with an acid. Upon drying, the casein paint film is "hard, brittle, and insoluble."[69] Because the paint itself is alkaline, according to the principle of "like dissolves like", it would be affected by another alkali. And, in fact, the isolated stencil layer was affected by the ammonium hydroxide; its surface quickly became blanched when the solvent was added to it. If the stencil layer is composed of casein—known to be a tough, essentially insoluble paint—it would be difficult to completely solubilize after so many years. Once again, the solubility tests yield a result that would have to be confirmed through higher analysis.

The last paint layer tested was the present paint, dating from the 1955 period of re-decoration by Conrad Schmitt. The results of this test were more clear than those of the previous two. When exposed to the five solvents, the only one that solubilized the paint and allowed it to re-form a film was the methylene chloride. This suggests that the paint is an oil- or oil-alkyd-based paint. For confirmation, one needs only to look at the letter written by Conrad Schmitt in 1954, in which the plans for the interior re-decoration of St. Alphonsus are outlined. In the letter, it is stated that "plastered surfaces throughout will then be prepared, carefully primed and painted in an oil base color."[70]

---

[69] Ibid, 8.

[70] Letter to Rev. Paul J. Beaudry, C.S.S.R. from Bernard O. Gruenke of Conrad Schmitt Studios, dated January 21, 1955.

FLUORESCENCE MICROSCOPY

Fluorescence microscopy is used to investigate the presence of certain organic materials, such as binding media, by observing an object's autofluorescnce and secondary fluorescence. The former refers to the light emitted by a material when it is exposed to (or excited by) ultra-violet light that has been passed through a filter. Because different materials autofluoresce uniquely, often a material can be identified by its autofluorescent characteristics. Secondary fluorescence is a product of the application of fluorescent stains, or fluorochromes. These stains "tag" certain organic materials, causing an observable chemical reaction or change in color. For instance, when a proteinaceous material (such as a glue-based paint) is stained with the fluorochrome FITC and observed with its appropriate filter, a yellow-green secondary fluorescence should be detected.[71] This type of laboratory technique is, at best, a confirmatory test and should be used in conjunction with other analyses. Results of the fluorochrome staining are difficult to interpret and negative results can often be misread as false positives. In addition, differentiating between actual staining of a material versus its mere absorption of the fluorochrome can be challenging. The information derived from the staining procedure, as well as the results of the solubility tests, should be viewed in conjunction with a more precise analytical tool, such as FTIR.

For this study, the goal of the fluorescence microscopy was to confirm the observations made during the solubility tests regarding the binding media of the *trompe l'oeil* paint layer. The solubility tests suggested that this paint layer is composed of a mixed medium, both a water-based material and a resin. Because water-soluble binding media are typically protein-based (media such as distempers and caseins), fluorochromes which identify proteins were used in this study. Three stains were used: Fluoroscein Isothiocyanate (FITC),

---

[71] Catherine S. Myers. *Adapted Nikon Binocular Microscope: Ultra--Violet Fluorescence Microscopy.* Unprinted material, course handout, February 1995.

0.1% in acetone; Tetramethyl Rhodamine Isothiocyanate (TRITC), 0.1% in acetone; and Dichlorofluorescein (DCF), 0.2% in ethanol. Both FITC and TRITC aid in the identification of proteinaceous materials, such as glue, casein and egg. For confirmation that the layer is not oil-bound, the fluorochrome DCF was used. DCF helps identify the presence of both unsaturated and saturated lipids, or oils. In addition, the autofluorescence behavior of the paint samples when exposed to ultraviolet light was observed.

Various paint samples removed from the nave walls, mounted in cross-section, were exposed to one of the three fluorochromes. A drop of the fluorochrome was placed onto the sample and allowed to dwell for approximately one minute. The reaction was halted with the addition of another solvent (Stoddard solution), the sample was wiped clean and covered with a glass coverslip. The result was then viewed under the microscope. The autofluorescence characteristics of each sample was also noted prior to the addition of the fluorochrome.

Samples #1W-04, #1W-08, #1E-04 and #1E-12, all removed from the nave walls, contain substantial evidence of the *trompe l'oeil* layer from Period II. Based on the solubility tests and the overall appearance of this paint layer, it is believed to be a water-based paint with a proteinaceous binder. Therefore, each of these samples was treated with a stain that would "tag" proteins, FITC and TRITC. Before the fluorochrome was added, it was noted that the *trompe l'oeil* layer in each sample does not autofluoresce when viewed in ultra-violet light. (See Figures 71 and 72) Any sort of auto-fluorescence would have helped identify the medium. In addition, neither the FITC or TRITC fluorochrome positively stained the *trompe l'oeil* layer in any of the three samples. When viewed in ultra-violet light with filter BV-1A, the samples stained with TRITC (#1W-08, #1W-04 and #1E-04) did not fluoresce the characteristic red that would indicate the presence of a protein. Similarly, the sample treated

FITC (#1W-08), did not fluoresce yellow-green when viewed in conjunction with filter XF-22.

Given that the *trompe l'oeil* paint layer is known to be water-soluble and most likely composed of a proteinaceous binder, the overwhelmingly negative results of the protein fluorochromes seem inaccurate. This may be due in part to the age of the fluorochromes or possibly contamination by other chemicals in the laboratory. It is also possible, although less likely, that the *trompe l'oeil* layer is composed of another water-soluble binder that is not proteinaceous, like a plant gum. The fluorochromes tested would not have tagged such a binder.

A negative result was also achieved with the oil stain. Sample #1E-12 was stained with the fluorochrome DCF, which stains any oil-containing material. The fluorochrome produced neither the pink nor the yellow fluorescence prompted by the presence of lipids. This negative result confirms the results of the solubility tests, which found the *trompe l'oeil* paint layer to be water-soluble.

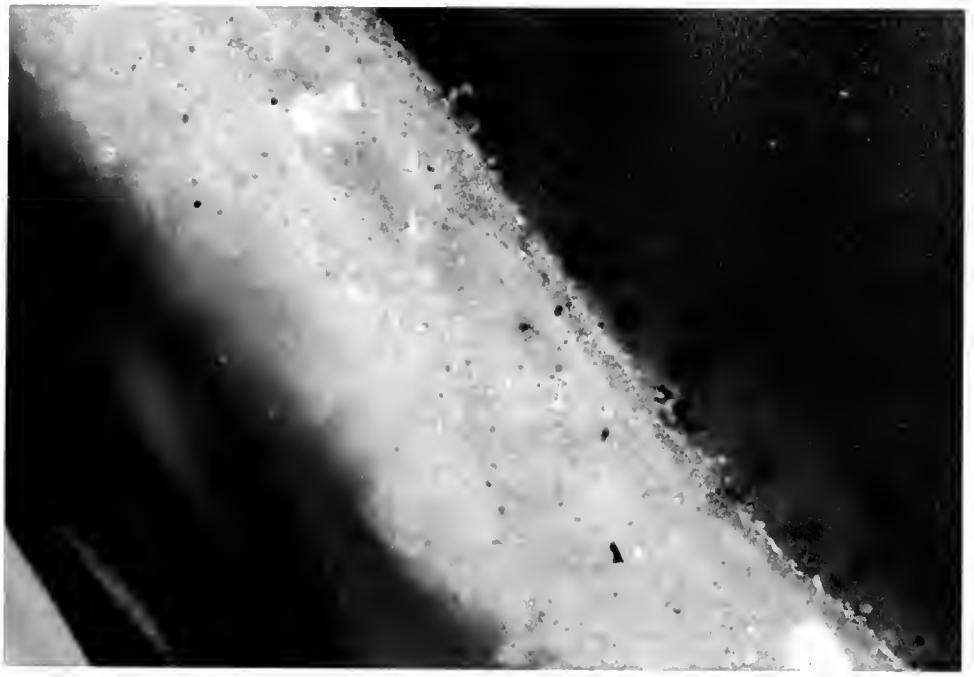


Fig. 71. St. Alphonsus Church. A cross-section of the Period II *trompe l'oeil* wall painting, viewed in normal reflected light. 25X magnification. (Photograph by author)

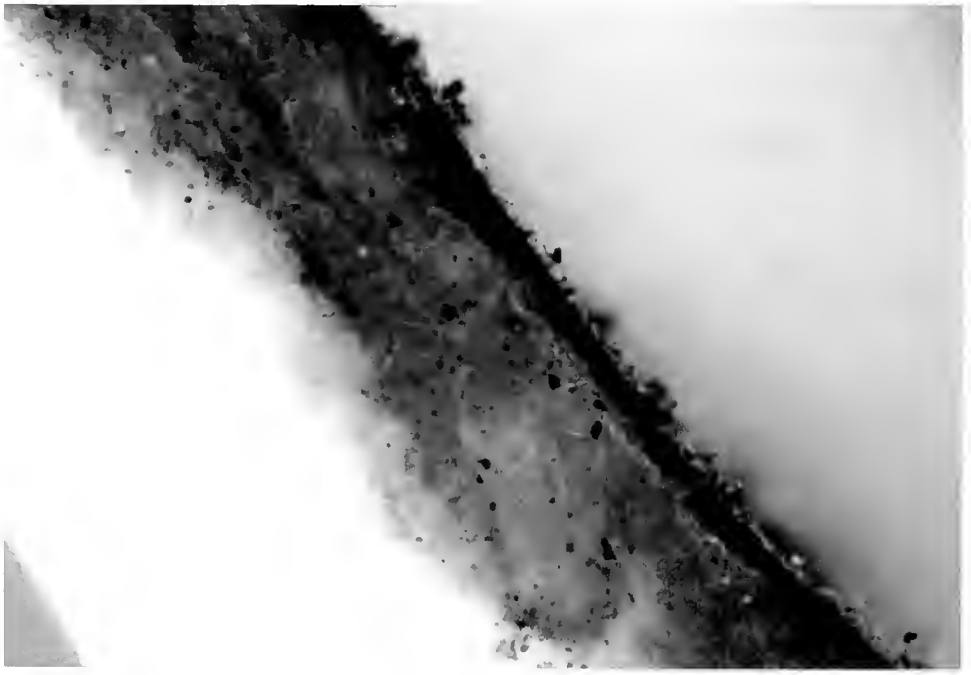


Fig. 72. St. Alphonsus Church. The same sample viewed in ultra-violet light. The *trompe l'oeil* painting does not auto-fluoresce when exposed to ultraviolet light, a characteristic that could have helped to identify the medium of the *trompe l'oeil* paint layer. 25X magnification (Photograph by author)

5.0 Interior Decorative Program: Conclusions and Recommendations

The interior of St. Alphonsus has seen a range of decorative schemes, from simple and temporary to lavishly ornamented. The four periods of interior finishes discussed in this study are strikingly different from one another, but each represents a significant time in the church's history. Period I (1857-1866) signifies the critical time in which St. Alphonsus was constructed, although it was a time when the interior finishing was incomplete. Period II (1866-ca. 1920) represents a very long span of time in which a single decorative program adorned the church interior, a program involving the high-style artistry of Italian immigrant painters. Whereas Period III (ca. 1920-1955) involves a time of distinct change and wealth for St. Alphonsus, when the church was attempting a revival. Period IV (1955-present), although the most modern decorative scheme and therefore the least important historically, involves finishes that have decorated the interior for almost fifty years.

While each period is significant in its own right, only the Period II decorative program represents a plausible option for restoration. It would be impossible to recreate the interior during Period I, as some features have been altered and many elements (including the ceiling paintings, the altars and the stained glass windows) were added *after* this time. As for Period III, the exposure and restoration of all of the various stenciling patterns would be a huge undertaking. Only Period II, which spanned over fifty years, represents a feasible period of interpretation. The Period II decorative campaign—with its figural ceiling paintings, elaborate *trompe l'oeil* wall paintings, and stained glass windows—was a period of sophisticated style and eloquence that has not since been equaled at St. Alphonsus. For many reasons, this era is the recommended period of interpretation for St. Alphonsus' interior.

The strongest rationale for recommending the restoration of Period II's decorative scheme is that the wall and ceiling paintings associated with this era represent the decoration

originally intended for the church. Although the paintings were not executed until eight years after the church was built, plans for their creation had been in place since the church's consecration in 1858. In 1865, the parishioners were solicited by their pastor "to contribute towards the frescoing" of the church, which lacked any real interior decoration. When the paintings were finally executed, the church interior was viewed as complete. This finishes campaign, combined with the addition of the German stained glass windows in 1888, remained the dominant decorative scheme for much of St. Alphonsus' history.

Fortunately, a large portion of the Period II decorative program remains intact and is an integral part of the present interpretation of St. Alphonsus' interior, another supporting factor in the feasibility of this particular period's restoration. Dominique Canova's rare ceiling paintings and the exquisite German stained glass windows, both of which date from Period II, are the focal points of any current visit to the church. However, they have existed for years as part of a confused mélange of later finishes—first the stenciling and now the modern finishes instituted in the 1950s. Reinstating the missing decorative elements associated with Period II (namely the wall painting and cornice finishes) would produce a cohesive interior program, one that coordinates all interior elements and showcases Canova's work instead of detracting from it.

A return to the Period II decorative program would involve a combination of conservation and restoration techniques. The first priority, and a rather urgent one, is the ceiling. The ceiling paintings and the plaster substrate on which they are executed are presently experiencing failure. There are significant areas of water staining and complete loss of plaster. Both the paintings and the plaster itself need to be investigated in order to determine their general condition and the cause of the apparent failures. A murals conservator, perhaps in conjunction with an architectural conservator specializing in plaster

conservation and a plaster craftsman, should investigate and assess the ceiling. The plaster should be stabilized—repaired and re-attached— prior to the implementation of any work on the ceiling paintings. In addition, it is critical that the paint history of the ceiling paintings be fully understood before any restoration work is planned. Questions such as "What were the original border designs and colors?" and "How much have the figural paintings been altered?" need to be addressed. Even if the Period II decorative scheme is not recreated in its entirety, the ceiling as a major element of artistic value should be studied in this fashion, to insure its future preservation.

As for the re-creation of the missing elements from Period II, this would also entail a mixture of conservation and restoration. The finishes for the cornice, columns and plaster work can easily be recreated, based on exposures and the color matches provided in this report. The cast iron columns and balcony should be grained to look like oak, as exposed in several locations and illustrated in this report. However, in order to appropriately restore the wall paintings in the nave, narthex and apse, additional attempts to uncover the paintings would have to be made. Once uncovered, the small windows revealing the original paintings could be conserved and permanently viewed *in situ*. The color, style and technique of the original paintings could then be duplicated throughout the rest of the church interior. (It may also be of interest to expose for viewing the tinted plaster from Period I and the decorative painting from Period III, as examples of the church's other interior decorative campaigns.)

Fortunately, the most ubiquitous wall painting pattern (that of the *trompe l'oeil* paneling) has already been uncovered behind one of the side altars. It is, however, in need of conservation. In replicating the *trompe l'oeil* designs from this period, it is recommended that the new paintings be executed on canvas and placed over the existing painted plaster walls using a reversible adhesive. The original surfaces should be stabilized and isolated first, using

a reversible, synthetic resin coating. The use of a canvas substrate allows for the preservation of all existing finishes underneath and provides a smooth, stable ground on which to carry out the new paintings. It should be noted that a similar technique was used in the re-painting of the southwest stair hall at St. Alphonsus; a synthetic fiber canvas was attached to the walls prior to their being repainted.

If it is decided that the decorative program of Period II be restored, it may be more feasible to gradually reinstate its various elements. A conservation master plan for the interior finishes should be developed with an architectural conservator, with the goal of re-establishing the Period II scheme. This plan could be implemented over a long period of time, with marked phases of conservation and restoration of the Period's finishes. For instance, an early phase would involve the conservation of the ceiling paintings and restoration of the Period II borders surrounding the figural paintings on the ceiling. Another phase, also an early one, would be the exposure and conservation of the Period II finishes on the walls. Their exposure would ensure both a thorough understanding of the period's finishes, as well as their long-term preservation. Re-creation of the *trompe l'oeil* wall paintings may represent another phase of the master plan, and the re-creation of the cornice finishes yet another.

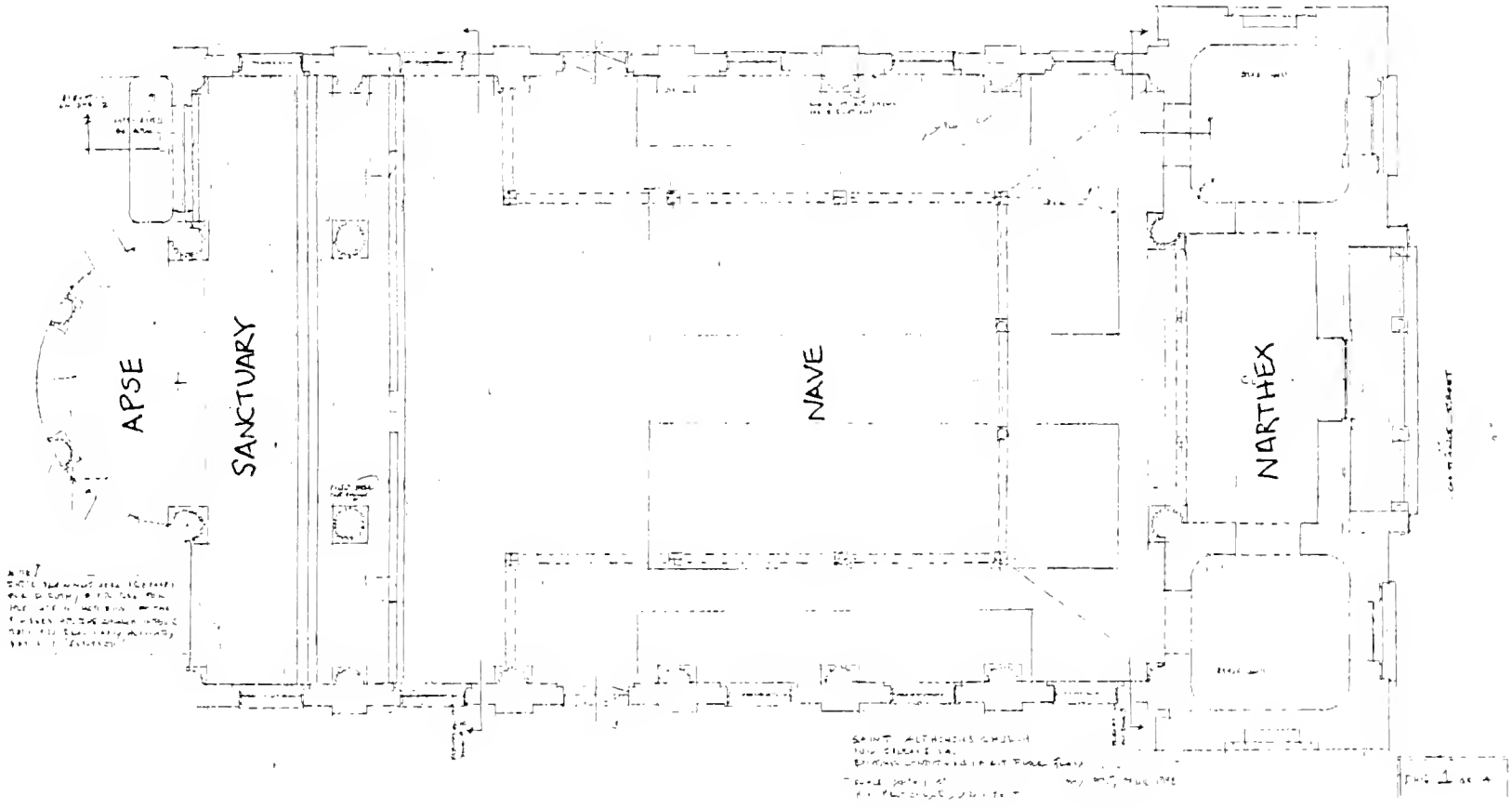
An additional, more conservative, option for the treatment of the interior is to simply recreate the existing Period IV paint scheme, but allow for several exposure windows to demonstrate previous finish campaigns. Exposure windows could be created, in one selected area of the church, that would display representative portions of the decorative finishes of Period I through IV. Conservation of the exposed finishes, as well as some type of protective treatment, would also have to be performed. The drawback of this approach, however, is that the exposures would provide only fragmentary views of the earlier interior decorative

schemes. The awesome appearance of the entire church interior, at a specific point in history, would be incomprehensible to the observer. In addition, this option does not address the confusing mixture of various interior elements from different periods that presently exist in the church.

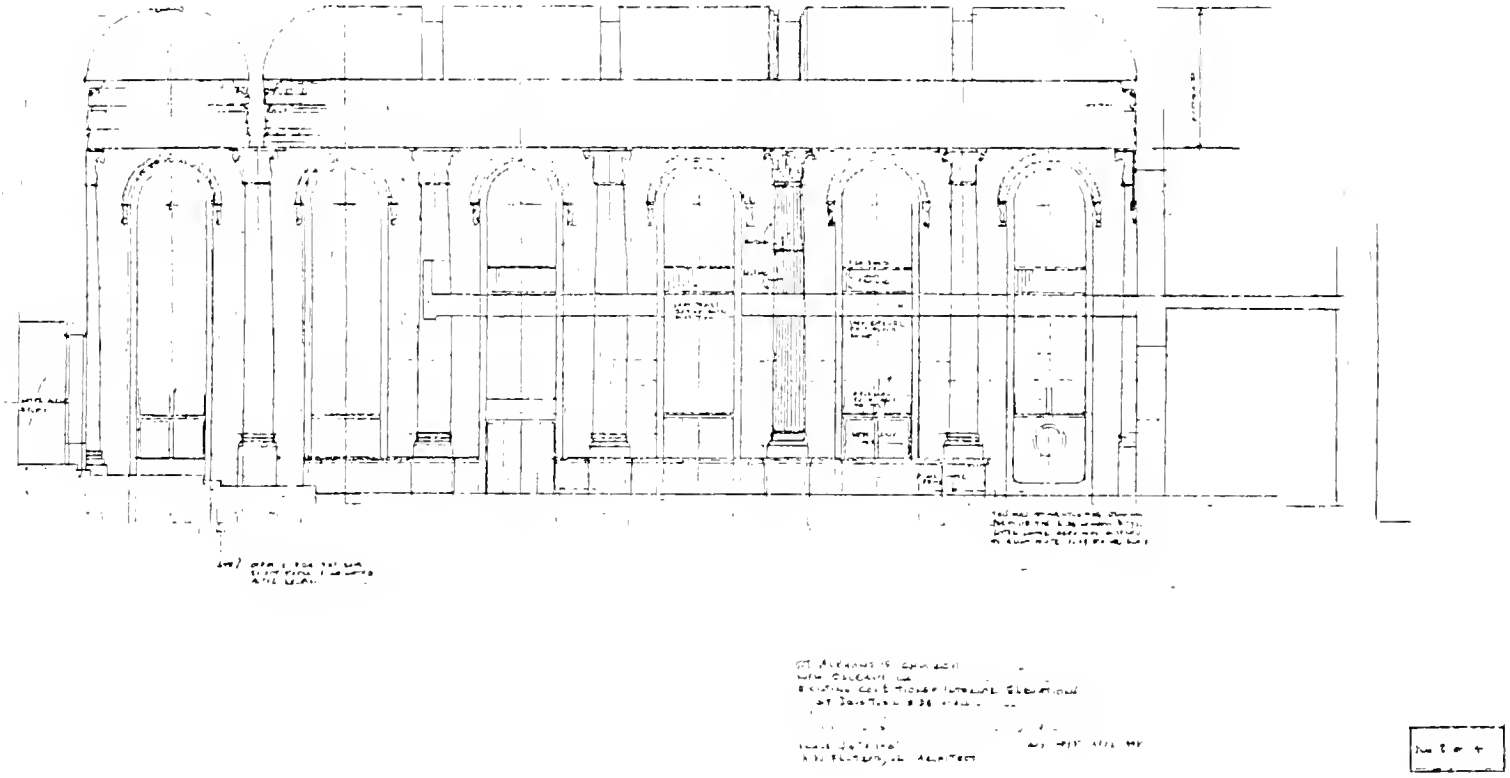
Regardless of *how* or *when* the restoration work is executed, the present condition of the church interior makes some degree of intervention inevitable. The years of water damage and deferred maintenance have taken their toll on the interior finishes. However, it is imperative that prior to any intervention, the Friends of St. Alphonsus develop a conservation master plan for the interior, or at least determine a period of interpretation. When contemplating which historic period to interpret, Period II should be seriously considered. Although re-creation of Period II's decorative campaign entails further study and conservation work, it is the most appropriate scheme to reinstate and involves little removal of subsequent fabric. If the interior is to be attributed to one particular point in time, it should be the period that incorporates its original decorative paint scheme, central and side altars and stained glass windows. The decorative scheme of this period adorned the interior for most of St. Alphonsus' history and its key components are intact and still a visible part of the church today.

APPENDIX A

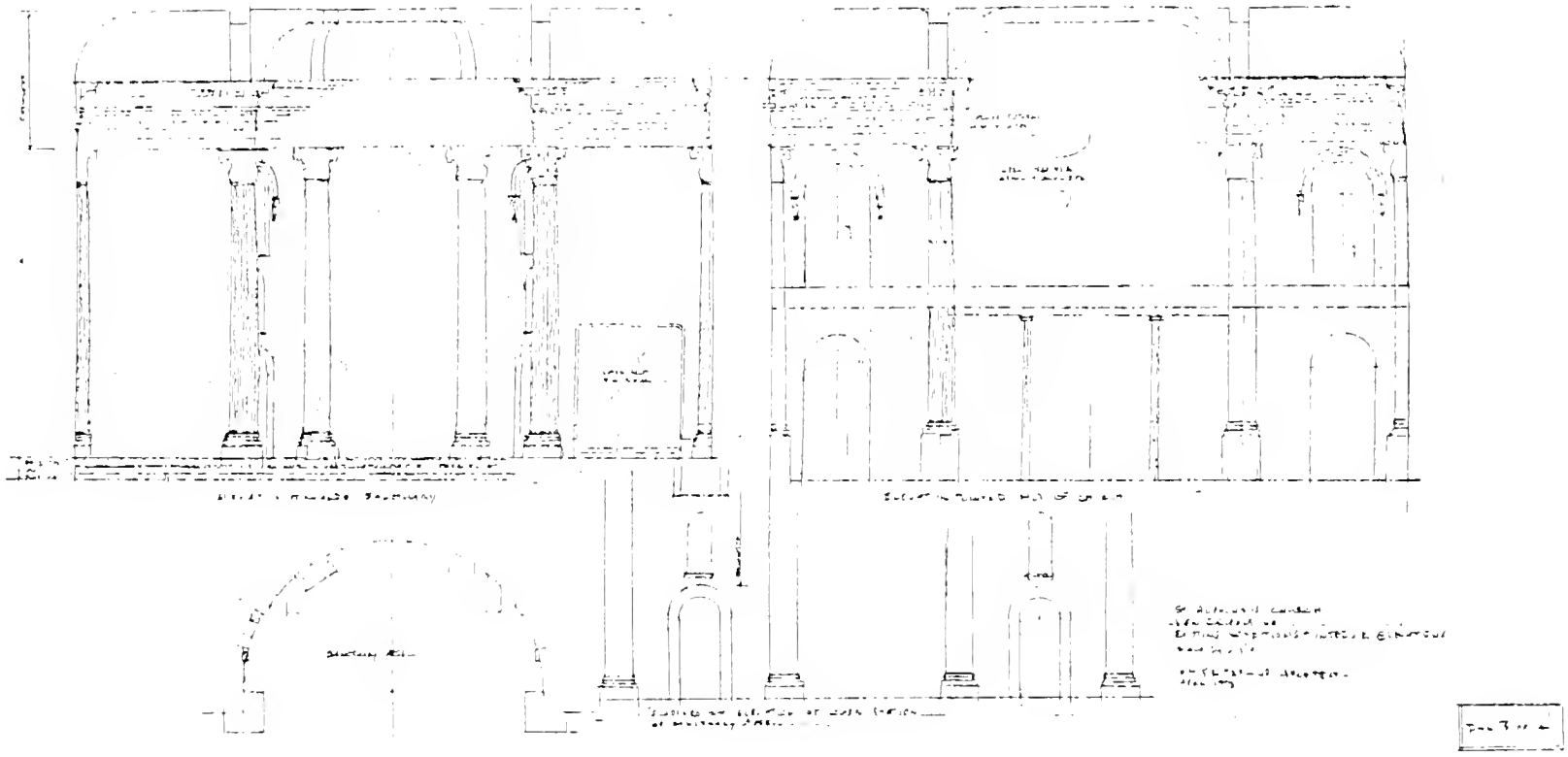
FLOORPLANS AND INTERIOR ELEVATIONS OF ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH



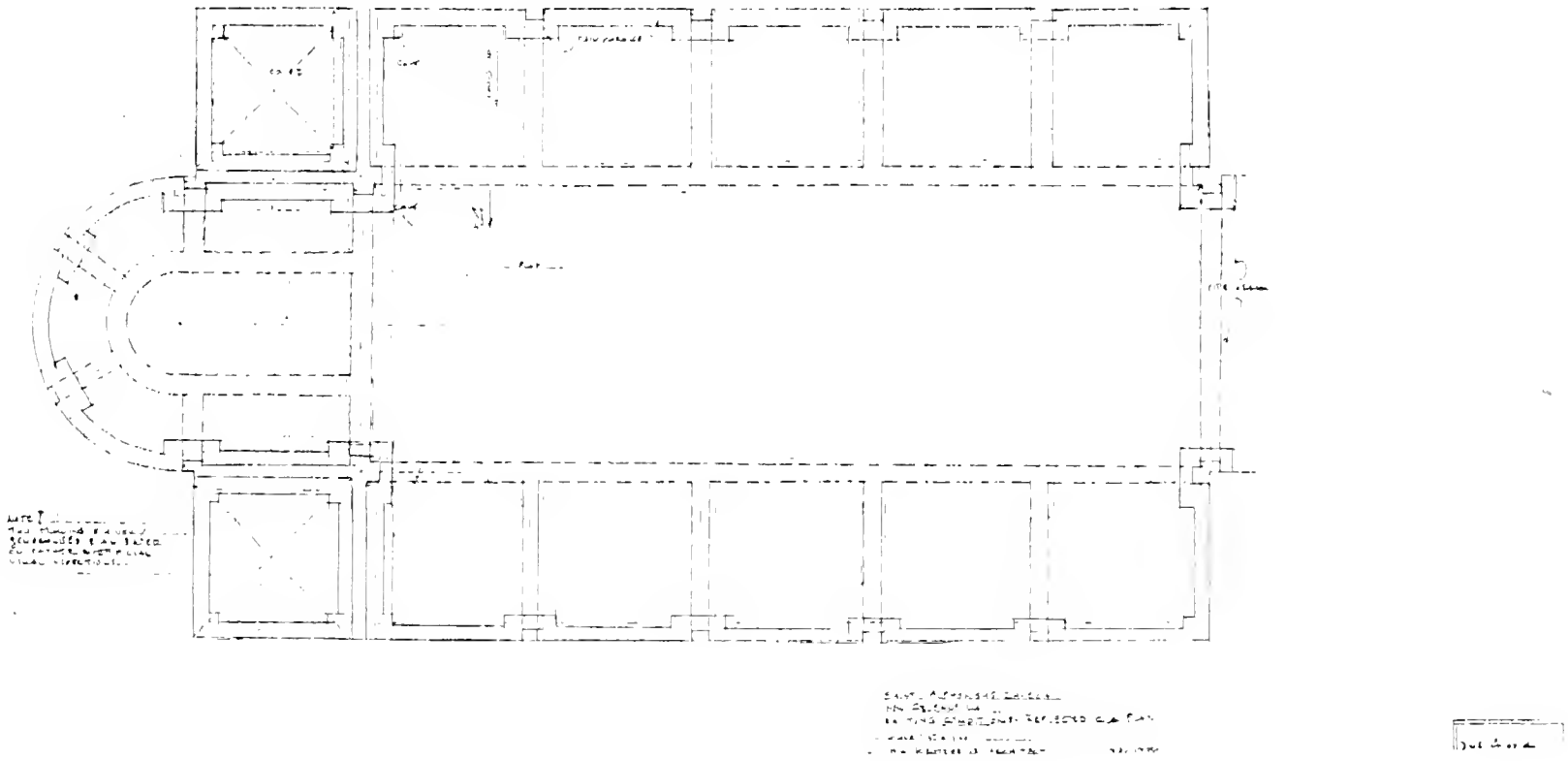
St. Alphonsus Church. New Orleans, Louisiana. Existing Conditions - First Floor Plan.
(Drawing by H. W. Krotzer, Architect. May 1995, April 1998.)



St. Alphonsus Church. New Orleans, Louisiana. Existing Conditions - Interior Elevation of East Wall.
(Drawing by H. W. Krotzer, Architect. May 1995, April 1998.)



St. Alphonsus Church. New Orleans, Louisiana. Existing Conditions - Interior Elevations of Sanctuary and Narthex. (Drawing by H. W. Krotzer, Architect. April 1998.)



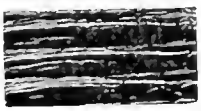
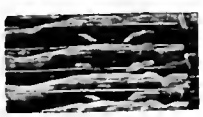
St. Alphonsus Church. New Orleans, Louisiana. Existing Conditions - Reflected Ceiling Plan.
(Drawing by H. W. Krotzer, Architect. May 1998.)

APPENDIX B

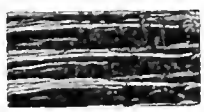
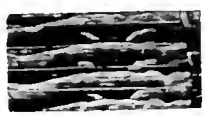
FINISHES HISTORY SCHEMA

(Note: The appearance of the color swatches in the following section has been affected by the duplication process and is not the same as the original. Any color matching should be made according to the Munsell notation and not to the color swatch.)

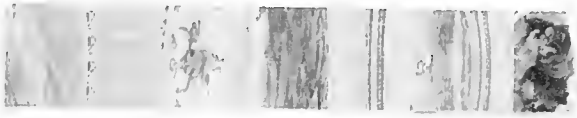
Finishes History Scheme: Period I (1857 - 1865)

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION OF FINISH(ES)	PAINTED FINISH COLOR(S) DURING THIS PERIOD
CEILING	off-white plaster (untinted and unpainted)	Munsell No. 2.5Y 9/2
APSE WALLS	buff-colored plaster (tinted)	Munsell No. 7.5YR 7/6
NAVE AND SANCTUARY WALLS	pinkish-tan, tinted plaster	Munsell No. 7.5YR 7/6
WINDOW TRIM	cream-colored paint	Munsell No. 2.5Y 9/2
CORNICE	cream-colored paint with metallic gold on select elements	Munsell No. 2.5Y 9/4
FULL AND ENGAGED PLASTER COLUMNS	shafts: buff-colored paint capitals: buff-colored paint with brown on select elements	Munsell No. 2.5Y 9/4 Munsell No. 5YR 2/4
CAST IRON COLUMNS	wood-grained	 Munsell No. 5YR 4/4 (ground color)
CHOIR LOFT	paneled front: wood- grained hand rail: dark brown-colored paint	 Munsell No. 10YR 7/6(front-ground color) Munsell No. (hand rail)
STAIRWELL/ SIDE ENTRIES	pinkish-tan, tinted plaster	Munsell No. 7.5YR 7/6

Finishes History Scheme: Period II (1865 - ca. 1920)

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION OF FINISH(ES)	PAINTED FINISH COLOR(S) DURING THIS PERIOD		
CEILING	figural paintings surrounded by *trompe l'oeil* borders			
APSE WALLS	buff-colored field with *trompe l'oeil* panels of marble	Munsell No. 10YR 7/4	Munsell No. 2.5YR 5/8	Munsell No. 7.5YR 7/6
NAVE AND SANCTUARY WALLS	buff-colored field with *trompe l'oeil* architectural elements	Munsell No. 10YR 7/4	Munsell No. 10YR 6/6	Munsell No. 10YR 3/2 Munsell No. 5Y 8.5/1
WINDOW TRIM	light gray-colored paint	Munsell No. N7.5/50.7% R		
CORNICE	cream-colored paint with metallic gold on select elements	Munsell No. 2.5Y 9/2		
FULL AND ENGAGED PLASTER COLUMNS	shafts: cream-colored paint capitals: metallic gold	Munsell No. 2.5Y 9/2		
CAST IRON COLUMNS	Phase 1: wood-grained Phase 2: white Phase 3: cream	 Munsell No. 10YR 7/6	Munsell No. N9.25/84.2% R	Munsell No. 2.5Y 9/2
CHOIR LOFT	Phase 1: wood-grained Phase 2: white and gold Phase 3: cream and gold	 Munsell No. 10YR 7/6 (ground)	Munsell No. N9.25/84.2% R	Munsell No. 2.5Y 9/2
STAIRWELL/ SIDE ENTRIES	salmon-colored paint (possibly part of a decorative painting scheme)	Munsell No. 7.5YR 5/6		

Finishes History Scheme: Period III (ca. 1920 - 1955)

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION OF FINISH(ES)	PAINTED FINISH COLOR(S) DURING THIS PERIOD
CEILING	Period II figural paintings (design of surrounding borders unknown)	
APSE WALLS	cream-colored field with painted panels of green and brown marble	Munsell No. 2.5Y 9/4 Munsell No. 5Y 4/4 Munsell No. 2.5BG 2/4
NAVE AND SANCTUARY WALLS	cream-colored field with brown sunburst-pattern stenciling	Munsell No. 2.5Y 8.5/4 Munsell No. 10YR 6/6-5/6
WINDOW TRIM	dark brown colored paint	Munsell No. 7.5YR 3/6
CORNICE	undetermined	
FULL AND ENGAGED PLASTER COLUMNS	shafts: ochre, green and maroon, chevron pattern capitals: metallic gold	Munsell No. 2.5Y 8/6 Munsell No. 10R 4/4 Munsell No. 2.5BG 2/4
CAST IRON COLUMNS	ochre, maroon, cream and brown marbling	Munsell No. 2.5Y 8/6 Munsell No. 10R 4/4 Munsell No. 2.5Y 8.5/4 Munsell No. 10YR 6/6
CHOIR LOFT	paneled front: gray with metallic gold on select elements hand rail: black	Munsell No. 5Y 8.5/1(Front) Munsell No. N0.5/0.6% R (hand rail)
STAIRWELL/ SIDE ENTRIES	cream-colored paint (possibly the field for a stencil pattern)	Munsell No. 2.5Y 8.5/4-10YR 9/4

Finishes History Scheme: Period IV (1955 - present)

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION OF FINISH(ES)	PAINTED FINISH COLOR(S) DURING THIS PERIOD
CEILING	Period II figural paintings with painted, geometric borders from Period IV	
APSE WALLS	gray-colored paint	Munsell No. 2.5Y 7/2
NAVE AND SANCTUARY WALLS	gray-colored paint	Munsell No. 2.5Y 7/2
WINDOW TRIM	gray-colored paint	Munsell No. N8.25/63.6% R
CORNICE	off-white with select moldings painted pale blue, red, dark pink and metallic gold	Munsell No. 2.5Y 8.5/2 Munsell No. 7.5R 7/4 Munsell No. 10B 5/4
FULL AND ENGAGED PLASTER COLUMNS	shafts: off-white capitals: off-white with select elements painted red, dark pink and metallic gold	Munsell No. 2.5Y 8.5/2 Munsell No. 7.5R 7/4
CAST IRON COLUMNS	off-white colored paint	Munsell No. 2.5Y 8.5/2
CHOIR LOFT	paneled front: off-white with select elements painted gray and pink hand rail: dark brown	Munsell No. 2.5Y 8.5/2 Munsell No. 7.5R 7/4 Munsell No. 2.5Y 7/2 Munsell No. 2.5Y 2/2 (handrail)
STAIRWELL/ SIDE ENTRIES	gray-colored paint	Munsell No. 2.5Y 7/2

APPENDIX C

KEY TO SAMPLE LOCATIONS

Key to Sample Locations

First Floor Level

1N-01	North wall of apse, east pilaster under main altar, bottom of rib.
1N-02	North wall of apse, east pilaster of main altar area, bottom of fourth rib from back of column.
1N-03	North wall of apse, east pilaster of altar area, rib.
1N-04	Freestanding east column of altar area, taken from opening cut into added wood base surrounding earlier plaster base, earlier base sampled.
1N-05	North wall of apse, east pilaster of main altar area, from edge of rib.
1N-06	North wall of apse, east pilaster of main altar area, from edge of rib.
1N-07	North wall of apse, base of east pilaster of altar area.
1N-08	North wall of apse, painted plaster from around nailer for present stairwell/platform behind altar.
1N-09	North wall of apse, painted cementitious plaster behind altar.
1N-10	North wall of apse, plaster wall behind altar.
1N-11	North wall of apse, plaster wall behind altar, highest band (area) of wall, above Maltese cross.
1N-12	North wall of apse, east pilaster under altar, from rib.
1N-13	North wall of apse, plaster wall behind altar, area of infill over a nailer (nailer probably for old altar).
1N-14	North wall of apse, wall behind altar, removed above band of cementitious plaster.
1N-15	North wall of apse, east pilaster under altar, from rib.
1N-16	North wall of apse, east pilaster under altar, from area between ribs.
1N-17	North wall of apse, behind altar, from area around where a cross used to hang, below present Maltese cross.
1S-01	Second floor level, southeast corner of church, pilaster to the east of organ pipes, bottom band.
1S-02(a)	Second floor level, southeast corner of church, pilaster to the east of organ pipes, capital, bottom of "torch" detail.
1S-02(b)	Second floor level, southeast corner of church, pilaster to the east of organ pipes, capital, leaves above "torch" detail.
1S-02(c)	Second floor level, southeast corner of church, pilaster to the east of organ pipes, capital, "torch".
1S-03	Second floor level, southeast corner of church, pilaster to the east of organ pipes, capital, background behind acanthus leaf.
1S-04	Second floor level, organ pipes paneling, base.
1S-05	South wall of nave, pilaster between arched opening to east stairwell and entrance vestibule. From upper band of base.
1S-06	South wall of nave, pilaster between arched opening to east stairwell and entrance vestibule. From middle band of base.
1S-07	South wall of nave, pilaster between arched opening to east stairwell and entrance vestibule. From bottom, wide band of base.
1S-08	South wall of nave, pilaster between arched opening to east stairwell and entrance vestibule. From rib.

1W-01	West wall of nave, fifth bay from altar, lower inside of window reveal.
1W-02	West wall of nave, from floor of sixth bay from altar. Probably from an area under window.
1W-03	West wall of nave, sixth bay from altar, window surround, from area exposed by removal of a confessional.
1W-04	West wall of nave, third bay from altar, north side of door to exterior.
1W-05	West wall of nave, pilaster behind west altar (second pilaster from apse), base.
1W-06	West wall of nave, window of fourth bay from altar, from muntin between operable windows and fixed stained glass panels.
1W-07	West wall of nave, fifth bay from altar, south side of window, jamb.
1W-08	West wall of nave, plaster wall where balcony was removed in 1888.
1W-09	West wall of nave, plaster wall where balcony was removed in 1888, from patch material.
1W-10	West wall of apse, upper portion of wall between column and stained glass window.
1W-11(a)	West wall of apse, doorway to present office, from central design of arched reveal, petal of flower.
1W-11(b)	West wall of apse, doorway to present office, from central design of arched reveal, flat portion of swag design.
1W-11(c)	West wall of apse, doorway to present office, from central design of arched reveal, raised portion of swag design.
1W-11(d)	West wall of apse, doorway to present office, from central design of arched reveal, central fleur-de-lis design.
1W-11(e)	West wall of apse, doorway to present office, from central design of arched reveal, background of plaster relief work.
1W-11(f)	West wall of apse, doorway to present office, from wooden jamb of arched reveal.
1W-12	West wall of nave, Sacred Heart altar, where altar meets wall
1W-13	West wall of nave, Sacred Heart altar, front of altar under shelf.
1W-14	West wall of nave, plaster wall where it abuts Sacred Heart altar.
1E--01	East wall of nave, sixth bay from altar, from area where confessional was removed, north side of bay.
1E-02	East wall of nave, seventh (corner) pilaster from altar, taken at junction between column and wall.
1E-03	East pilaster by Constance Street entrance, taken from area cut away to put in a wood statue stand.
1E-04	East wall of nave, rear (where confessional was removed), top of rail (now removed) where paint collected.
1E-05	East wall of nave, rear (where confessional was removed), top of rail (now removed) where paint collected.
1E-06	East wall of nave, rear (where confessional was removed), large segment of paint on plaster taken at exposed brick base.
1E-07	East wall of nave, rear (where confessional was removed), segment of paint on plaster taken at exposed brick base, taken from beneath layers of recent plaster, sample from directly on brickwork at edge of opening.
1E-08	East row of freestanding columns in nave, last one in series at Constance Street side.

1E-09	East row of freestanding columns in nave, last one in series at Constance Street side.
1E-10	East wall of nave, sixth pilaster from altar, bottom of rib.
1E-11	East wall of nave, sixth pilaster from altar, bottom of area between ribs.
1E-12	East wall of nave, to right of third pilaster between pilaster and door to schoolyard, approx. 8" from top of wainscoting.
	East wall of nave, to right of third pilaster between pilaster and door to schoolyard, approx. 5" from top of wainscoting at juncture between pilaster and wall.
1E-14	East wall of nave, sixth pilaster from altar, taken at base at junction with wall.
1E-15	East wall of nave, sixth pilaster from altar, area in between ribs.
1E-16	East wall of nave, sixth pilaster from altar, from rib.
1E-17	East wall of rear east stairwell, paint on wall above hand rail.
1E-18	East wall of nave, plaster reveal of second window from altar.
1E-19	East wall of nave, between round window at rear of church and rear corner pilaster.
1E-20	Western half of arched plaster opening between east gallery and east stairwell.
1E-21	East wall of nave, rear, between corner pilaster and area where confessional was removed, behind later wainscoting.
1E-22	East wall of nave, rear, between arched opening to stairhall and pilaster, (later) wooden wainscoting.
1E-23	East gallery, pressed tin ceiling, from bottom detail directly above wooden soffit.
1E-24	East gallery, pressed tin ceiling, from braided detail.
1E-25	East wall of nave, last bay from altar, north side, original wainscoting, from bead of tongue-and-groove panel.
1E-26	East wall of nave, exterior door, from lower portion of north door.
1E-27	East wall of nave, exterior door, jamb.
1E-28	East wall of nave, third bay from the altar, window over present exterior door, from mullion between stained glass windows.
1E-29	East wall of nave, fourth bay from altar, lower, operable window, from frame of sash.
1E-30	East wall of nave, fourth bay from altar, upper stained glass window, from frame of sash.
1E-31	East wall of apse, plaster wall, from directly below cabinet set into wall.

Second Floor Level

2W-01	West wall, fourth column from main altar, piece of a rib of the fluted pilaster.
2E-01	East choir loft, front of northernmost panel.
2E-02	East choir loft, north side (return), panel.
2E-03	East wall of nave, just outside of north end of choir loft, north side of pilaster, above where molding of balcony would have been before its removal in 1888.
2E-04	East wall of nave, just outside of north end of choir loft, north side of pilaster, below (or behind) where molding would have been before its removal in 1888.
2E-05	East wall of choir loft, between third pilaster from altar and window (above door below), below molding/charail.
2E-06	East wall of choir loft, between third pilaster from altar and window, directly above chairail.
2E-07	East wall of choir loft, between third pilaster from altar and window, 5" above chairail.
2E-08	East wall of choir loft, third window from altar, south surround.
2E-09	East wall of choir loft, between capital of third pilaster from altar and window arch, approx. 10" from rail.
2E-10	East wall of choir loft, above discovered stencil design.
2E-11	East wall of choir loft, third pilaster from altar, area between ribs.
2E-12	East wall of choir loft, third pilaster from altar, from raised area (reeding) at bottom of column.
2E-13	East wall of choir loft, third pilaster from altar, from rib.
2E-14	East wall of choir loft, third pilaster from altar, bottom of cast iron capital.
2E-15	East wall of choir loft, third pilaster from altar, bottom of capital, second band from bottom (now decorated with a gold band).
2E-16	East wall of choir loft, third pilaster from altar, top of capital, tip of acanthus leaf.
2E-17	East choir loft, balcony front, northernmost bay, edge of top rail.
2E-18	East choir loft, balcony front, northernmost bay, molding directly below hand rail.
2E-19	East choir loft, balcony front, northernmost bay, molding below hand rail.
2E-20	East choir loft, balcony front, northernmost bay, molding below hand rail.
2E-21	East choir loft, balcony front, northernmost bay, molding below hand rail.
2E-22	East choir loft, balcony front, northernmost bay, molding below hand rail.
2E-23	East choir loft, balcony front, northernmost bay, molding below hand rail.
2E-24	East choir loft, balcony front, northernmost bay, molding below hand rail.
2E-25	East choir loft, balcony front, northernmost bay, molding below hand rail.
2E-26	East choir loft, balcony front, northernmost bay, molding surrounding panel.
2E-27	East choir loft, balcony front, northernmost bay, panel molding.
2E-28	East choir loft, balcony front, northernmost bay, panel molding.
2E-29	East choir loft, balcony front, northernmost bay, panel molding.
2E-30	East choir loft, balcony front, northernmost bay, recessed panel.
2E-32	East wall of nave, fallen cornice fragment.
2E-33(a)	East wall of nave, fallen cornice fragment.

2E-33(b)	East wall of nave, fallen cornice fragment, egg-and-dart molding.
2E-34	East wall of nave, fallen cornice fragment, rounded bead above dentils.
2E-35	East wall of nave, fallen cornice fragment, area behind dentils.
2E-36(a)	East wall of nave, fallen cornice fragment, area behind dentils.
2E-36(b)	East wall of nave, fallen cornice fragment, dentil.
2E-37	East wall of nave, fallen cornice fragment, smaller egg-and-dart molding.
2E-38	East wall of nave, fallen cornice fragment, smaller egg-and-dart molding.
2E-39	East choir loft, northernmost bay, underside/soffit of balcony front, from outer band surrounding panel.
2E-40	East choir loft, northernmost bay, underside/soffit of balcony front, from raised molding around inner panel.

APPENDIX D

FINISHES ANALYSES DATA

Finishes Analyses Data: Media Analysis

Solubility of Specific Paint Films in Organic Solvents and Diluents*

Finish Layer	Distilled Water (Warm)	Ethyl Alcohol	Acetone	Methylene Chloride	Ammonium Hydroxide		Possible Media Identified
Period II - *Trompe l'oeil*	PS	PS	I	I	(not tested)		mixed: protein & resin
Period III - Stencil Layer	I	I	I	SS	SS		casein or oil
Period IV- Present Paint	I	I	I	S	(not tested)		oil

*The following letters were used to indicate degree of solubility: S= soluble; I= insoluble; PS= partially soluble; and SS= slightly soluble (i.e. paint film if affected through swelling or blanching, but not truly dissolved).

Finishes Analyses Data: Media Analysis

Fluorochrome Staining of *Trompe l'oeil* Paint Layer*

Sample Number	FITC	TRITC	DCF		Possible Media Identified
#1W-04	negative	negative	(not tested)		inconclusive
#1W-08	negative	negative	(not tested)		inconclusive
#1E-04	negative	negative	(not tested)		inconclusive
#1E-12	(not tested)	(not tested)	negative		not an oil paint

*A positive stain can be interpreted in the following way: FITC= protein present; TRITC: protein present; DCF: lipids (oil) present.

Finishes Analyses Data: Pigment Analysis

Interpretation of Elemental Analysis of Specific Paint Layers

Finish Layer	Elements Detected	Possible Pigments
Period I - Tinted Plaster (Sample # 1N-17)	Calcium (Ca) Carbon (C) Magnesium (Mg) Silicon (Si) Aluminum (Al) Lead (Pb)	Red Lead (remaining elements may be attributed to plaster)
Period III - Stencil Layer (Sample #1E-16)	Titanium (Ti) Zinc (Zn) Barium (Ba) Sulfur (S)	Titanated Lithipone

APPENDIX E

REPRESENTATIVE PAINT SAMPLE STRATIGRAPHIES

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION LABORATORY

ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH
INTERIOR FINISHES ANALYSIS
STRATIGRAPHY SHEET

Sample Number: 1N-05
Location of Sample: engaged column flute, altar area, north wall of apse
Removed By: DK
Examined By: DK
Photomicrograph in Report: no

PAINT STRATIGRAPHY

Substrate: white plaster (finish coat)

Paint Layers:	1. buff	11. pink	21.
	2. cream	12. gray/off-white	22.
	3. (dirt)	13.	23.
	4. white	14.	24.
	5. warm cream	15.	25.
	6. (plaster/skim coat)	16.	26.
	7. white	17.	27.
	8. warm cream	18.	28.
	9. (plaster skim coat)	19.	29.
	10. white	20.	30.

Comments:

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION LABORATORY

ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH
INTERIOR FINISHES ANALYSIS
STRATIGRAPHY SHEET

Sample Number: 1N-06
Location of Sample: engaged column flute, altar area, north wall of apse
Removed By: DK
Examined By: DK
Photomicrograph in Report: no

PAINT STRATIGRAPHY

Substrate: white plaster (finish coat)

Paint Layers:	1. buff	11. pink	21.
	2. cream	12. gray/off-white	22.
	3. (dirt)	13.	23.
	4. white	14.	24.
	5. warm cream	15.	25.
	6. (dirt)	16.	26.
	7. dark cream/ochre	17.	27.
	8. dark brown (thin)	18.	28.
	9. (dirt)	19.	29.
	10. white	20.	30.

Comments: The Period III decorative painting campaign (7, 8) is visible in this column sample.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION LABORATORY

ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH
INTERIOR FINISHES ANALYSIS
STRATIGRAPHY SHEET

Sample Number: 1N-17
Location of Sample: north wall of apse, behind altar
Removed By: DK
Examined By: DK
Photomicrograph in Report: no (SEM/EDS mapping of sample in Fig. 68 & Fig. 69)

PAINT STRATIGRAPHY

Substrate: tinted buff-colored plaster

Paint Layers:	1. (dirt)	11.	21.
	2. brown (thick)	12.	22.
	3. (dirt)	13.	23.
	4. gray	14.	24.
	5.	15.	25.
	6.	16.	26.
	7.	17.	27.
	8.	18.	28.
	9.	19.	29.
	10.	20.	30.

Comments: This is a good sample of the buff-colored tinted plaster. The thick, brown layer (2) is the *trompe l'oeil* painting. The lack of later finishes is due to the sample's location behind the main altar, added in 1868.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION LABORATORY

ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH
INTERIOR FINISHES ANALYSIS
STRATIGRAPHY SHEET

Sample Number: 1S-05
Location of Sample: engaged column base, south wall, nave
Removed By: DK
Examined By: DK
Photomicrograph in Report: no

PAINT STRATIGRAPHY

Substrate: brown plaster (rough finish coat)

Paint Layers:	1. buff	11. pink	21.
	2. cream	12. gray/off-white	22.
	3. (dirt)	13.	23.
	4. white	14.	24.
	5. cream	15.	25.
	6. warm cream	16.	26.
	7. (dirt)	17.	27.
	8. dark cream	18.	28.
	9. (dirt)	19.	29.
	10. white	20.	30.

Comments: The column base lacks the white finish coat of plaster found on the shaft.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION LABORATORY

ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH
INTERIOR FINISHES ANALYSIS
STRATIGRAPHY SHEET

Sample Number: 1W-10
Location of Sample: west wall of apse, upper portion of wall adjacent to window
Removed By: DK
Examined By: DK
Photomicrograph in Report: no

PAINT STRATIGRAPHY

Substrate: none

Paint Layers:	1. dark salmon (thin)	11. gray	21.
	2. (dirt)	12.	22.
	3. cream	13.	23.
	4. white	14.	24.
	5. (dirt)	15.	25.
	6. buff	16.	26.
	7. dark green/metallic gold	17.	27.
	8. (dirt)	18.	28.
	9. white	19.	29.
	10. pink	20.	30.

Comments: The dark salmon layer (1) represents the *trompe l'oeil* wall painting depicting marble. The tinted plaster is not present in this sample, as the wall painting tends to cleave at the plaster surface.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION LABORATORY

ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH
INTERIOR FINISHES ANALYSIS
STRATIGRAPHY SHEET

Sample Number: 1W-11 (a)
Location of Sample: rosette of plaster relief door reveal, west wall of apse
Removed By: DK
Examined By: DK
Photomicrograph in Report: Fig. 38

PAINT STRATIGRAPHY

Substrate: brown plaster (rough finish coat)

Paint Layers:	1. white	11. gold leaf	21.
	2. (dirt)	12. white	22.
	3. white	13. (dirt)	23.
	4. (dirt)	14. white	24.
	5. white	15. metallic gold (platy)	25.
	6. cream	16. cream/pale yellow	26.
	7. (fracture)	17. (dirt)	27.
	8. bright yellow (thin)	18. pale gray	28.
	9. gold leaf (thin)	19. pink	29.
	10. cream	20. off-white/gray	30.

Comments: The rosette molding was not highlighted in metallic gold until Period II (9).

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION LABORATORY

ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH
INTERIOR FINISHES ANALYSIS
STRATIGRAPHY SHEET

Sample Number: 1E-09
Location of Sample: cast iron column, shaft
Removed By: DK
Examined By: DK
Photomicrograph in Report: Fig. 29

PAINT STRATIGRAPHY

Substrate: none (from cast iron column)

Paint Layers:	1. red-orange (primer)	11. off-white	21. off-white
	2. cream	12. (dirt)	22.
	3. pale brown	13. cream	23.
	4. dark brown	14. (dirt)	24.
	5. clear coating	15. cream (thick)	25.
	6. (dirt)	16. dark cream/ochre	26.
	7. white	17. reddish-brown	27.
	8. (dirt)	18. (dirt)	28.
	9. white	19. white	29.
	10. (dirt)	20. gray	30.

Comments: The cast iron columns were grained in Period I (1-5) and marbled in Period III (15-17).

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION LABORATORY

ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH
INTERIOR FINISHES ANALYSIS
STRATIGRAPHY SHEET

Sample Number: 1E-12
Location of Sample: east wall of nave, 8" from top of wainscoting
Removed By: DK
Examined By: DK
Photomicrograph in Report: no (similar to Fig. 45)

PAINT STRATIGRAPHY

Substrate: none

Paint Layers:	1. brown	11. pink	21.
	2. (dirt)	12. gray	22.
	3. pale peach	13.	23.
	4. white	14.	24.
	5. pale peach	15.	25.
	6. (dirt)	16.	26.
	7. cream	17.	27.
	8. brown (thin)	18.	28.
	9. (dirt)	19.	29.
	10. white	20.	30.

Comments: Layer 1 is media-rich and transparent; it is one of the colors used in the *trompe l'oeil* painting. Layers 7 and 8 represent the stenciling of Period III.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION LABORATORY

ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH
INTERIOR FINISHES ANALYSIS
STRATIGRAPHY SHEET

Sample Number: 1E-31
Location of Sample: east apse wall, taken from directly below cabinet set into wall
Removed By: DK
Examined By: DK
Photomicrograph in Report: no

PAINT STRATIGRAPHY

Substrate: none

Paint Layers:	1. pale brown/buff	11. black (thin)	21.
	2. dark salmon	12. (dirt)	22.
	3. (dirt)	13. white	23.
	4. pale peach/buff	14. pink	24.
	5. (dirt)	15. gray	25.
	6. white	16.	26.
	7. pale peach/buff	17.	27.
	8. (dirt)	18.	28.
	9. cream	19.	29.
	10. gold-green	20.	30.

Comments: The decorative painting of Period II is represented by layers 1 and 2. The decorative painting of Period III can be seen in layers 9 through 11.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION LABORATORY

ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH
INTERIOR FINISHES ANALYSIS
STRATIGRAPHY SHEET

Sample Number: 2E-10
Location of Sample: nave wall, second floor level (at choir loft)
Removed By: DK
Examined By: DK
Photomicrograph in Report: Fig. 58

PAINT STRATIGRAPHY

Substrate: none (paint cleaves at tinted plaster)

Paint Layers:	1. dark red-brown	11. pink	21.
	2. white	12. gray	22.
	3. dark salmon	13.	23.
	4. (dirt)	14.	24.
	5. cream/buff	15.	25.
	6. (dirt)	16.	26.
	7. dark cream	17.	27.
	8. pale brown (partial layer)	18.	28.
	9. (dirt)	19.	29.
	10. off-white	20.	30.

Comments: This sample was removed from an area known to contain a brown stencil design during Period III. The stencil is represented by the broken pale brown layer (8).

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION LABORATORY

ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH
INTERIOR FINISHES ANALYSIS
STRATIGRAPHY SHEET

Sample Number: 2E-16
Location of Sample: acanthus leaf of engaged column capital, east nave wall
Removed By: DK
Examined By: DK
Photomicrograph in Report: Fig. 28

PAINT STRATIGRAPHY

Substrate: none (from cast iron capital)

Paint Layers:	1. red-orange (primer)	11.	21.
	2. cream	12.	22.
	3. (dirt)	13.	23.
	4. metallic gold (platy)	14.	24.
	5. cream	15.	25.
	6. yellow- cream	16.	26.
	7. metallic gold (platy)	17.	27.
	8. off-white/gray	18.	28.
	9. off-white/gray	19.	29.
	10.	20.	30.

Comments: The metallic finishes (4, 7) correspond to Periods II and III. The acanthus leaf was originally painted cream.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION LABORATORY

ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH
INTERIOR FINISHES ANALYSIS
STRATIGRAPHY SHEET

Sample Number: 2E-20
Location of Sample: east choir loft, balcony front, molding below hand rail
Removed By: DK
Examined By: DK
Photomicrograph in Report: no

PAINT STRATIGRAPHY

Substrate: wood

Paint Layers:	1. cream/off-white	11. gold leaf	21.
	2. pale brown	12. (dirt)	22.
	3. dark brown (thin)	13. cream	23.
	4. tinted, clear coating	14. (dirt)	24.
	5. (dirt)	15. white	25.
	6. white	16. metallic gold (platy)	26.
	7. bright yellow	17. (dirt)	27.
	8. gold leaf	18. white	28.
	9. (dirt)	19. gray	29.
	10. cream	20.	30.

Comments: The choir loft's original graining campaign, which extended into the beginning of Period II, can be seen in layers 1 through 4. The pale brown is the ground layer, the dark brown the overgraining and the clear coating a protective, shiny varnish. The subsequent campaigns of white, cream and gray highlighted with gold can also be seen.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION LABORATORY

ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH
INTERIOR FINISHES ANALYSIS
STRATIGRAPHY SHEET

Sample Number: 2E-28
Location of Sample: east choir loft, balcony front, panel molding
Removed By: DK
Examined By: DK
Photomicrograph in Report: Fig. 32

PAINT STRATIGRAPHY

Substrate: wood

Paint Layers:	1. cream/off-white	11. (dirt)	21.
	2. pale brown	12. white	22.
	3. dark brown (thin)	13. metallic gold (platy)	23.
	4. tinted, clear coating	14. (dirt)	24.
	5. (dirt)	15. white	25.
	6. white	16. pink	26.
	7. off-white	17.	27.
	8. (dirt)	18.	28.
	9. cream	19.	29.
	10. cream	20.	30.

Comments: This portion of the panel was also originally grained. Following that, it was painted cream or white until the metallic gold was applied in Period III. It is presently painted pink.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION LABORATORY

ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH
INTERIOR FINISHES ANALYSIS
STRATIGRAPHY SHEET

Sample Number: 2E-34
Location of Sample: cornice, east wall of nave, ovolo molding above dentils
Removed By: DK
Examined By: DK
Photomicrograph in Report: Fig. 25

PAINT STRATIGRAPHY

Substrate: white plaster (finish coat)

Paint Layers:			
	1. red	11. (dirt)	21.
	2. bright yellow	12. white	22.
	3. metallic gold	13. pink	23.
	4. (fracture)	14. off-white/gray	24.
	5. white	15.	25.
	6. metallic gold (platy)	16.	26.
	7. (corrosion, dirt)	17.	27.
	8. gray	18.	28.
	9. (dirt)	19.	29.
	10. cream	20.	30.

Comments: This molding of the cornice was treated with metallic finishes early on (3, 6), but painted with neutral tones in its recent history.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION LABORATORY

ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH
INTERIOR FINISHES ANALYSIS
STRATIGRAPHY SHEET

Sample Number: 2E-35
Location of Sample: cornice, east wall of nave, flat area behind the dentils
Removed By: DK
Examined By: DK
Photomicrograph in Report: Fig. 24

PAINT STRATIGRAPHY

Substrate: white plaster (finish coat)

Paint Layers:	1. buff/cream (thick)	11.	21.
	2. (dirt)	12.	22.
	3. cream	13.	23.
	4. (dirt)	14.	24.
	5. off-white	15.	25.
	6. (dirt)	16.	26.
	7. white	17.	27.
	8. gray/off-white	18.	28.
	9.	19.	29.
	10.	20.	30.

Comments: This particular cornice molding has always been painted pale, neutral colors.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

"Art Tour of St. Alphonsus Church." Friends of St. Alphonsus, New Orleans, 1996. Photocopy.

Baird, H.C. *The Painter, Gilder, Varnisher's Companion.* N.p. 1850.

Church Decoration. A Manual of Appropriate Ornamentation. London: Frederick Warne and Co., 1874.

Downing, Andrew Jackson. *The Architecture of Country Houses. Part I. Cheap Cottages and Farm-Houses, Adapted too the United States.* New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1850.

The Ecclesiologist. 29 volumes. London: 1846-68.

Gruenke, Bernard O., Conrad Schmitt Studios. Letter to Rev. Paul J. Beaudry, C.S.S.R, January 21, 1955.

Kelly, A. Ashmun. *The Expert Calciminer. A Complete Working Manual for Interior Decorators*, 2nd edition. A. Ashmun Kelly, 1920.

Millar, William. *Plastering Plain and Decorative: A Practical Treatise on the Art and Craft of Plastering and Modeling.* New York: Truslove and Comba, 1897.

Myers, Catherine S. *Adapted Nikon Binocular Microscope: Ultra--Violet Fluorescence Microscopy.* Unprinted material, course handout, February 1995.

New Orleans Item. April 19, 1955.

The New Orleans Times. September 9, 1866 and November 30, 1866.

Redemptorist Brothers' Annals. Archives of the Redemptorist Brothers at the Redemptorist Vice-Province House. New Orleans, Louisiana. April 1850-November 1888.

St. Alphonsus Annual Report: Expenditures, Improvements on Church (1875-1904). Archives of the New Orleans Archdiocese. New Orleans, Louisiana.

St. Alphonsus Correspondence (185?-1929), Archives of the New Orleans Archdiocese. New Orleans, Louisiana.

Zacharie, James S. *New Orleans Guide.* New Orleans: F.F. Hansell & Bro., Ltd., 1893.

Secondary Sources

Caldwell, Joan G. "Italianate Domestic Architecture in New Orleans. 1850-1880, Volume One." Ph. D. diss., Tulane University, 1975.

Dorsey, John and James D. Dilts. *A Guide to Baltimore Architecture.* Cambridge, MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1973.

Gettens, Rutherford J. and George L. Stout. *Painting Materials. A Short Encyclopedia.* 2nd edition. New York: Dover Publications, 1966.

Hitchcock, Henry-Russell. *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.* Baltimore: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1968.

Kelly, Jacques. *St. Ignatius Parish, 1856-1981. An Historical Sketch.* Baltimore: St. Ignatius Church, 1981.

Kennedy, Roger S. *American Churches.* New York: Stewart, Tabori and Chang, 1982.

Kostof, Spiro. *A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Krieger, B.J. *Seventy-five Years of Service.* New Orleans: Redemptorist Fathers, 1923.

Mayer, Ralph. *The Artist's Handbook of Materials and Techniques.* New York: The Viking Press, 1945.

Robison, R. Warren. *Louisiana Church Architecture.* Lafayette: University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1984.

Whiffen, Marcus. *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles.* Revised Edition. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992.

Wilson, Samuel Jr. *The Church of St. Alphonsus.* New Orleans: The Friends of St. Alphonsus, 1996.

INDEX

acetone, 133, 134, 135
alumina, 128
ammonium hydroxide, 133, 134, 135, 136
  apse, 8, 16, 18, 22, 28, 29, 39, 41, 43, 55, 58, 63, 69, 73, 92, 99, 102, 105, 117, 122, 123, 143
Archdiocese of New Orleans archives, 32
autofluorescence, 137, 138

Baird, H.C., 42
balcony, 8, 16, 22, 29, 30, 34, 62, 63, 77, 95, 119, 125
barium sulphate, 129
Bendernagel, 23, 80
bronzing powder, 43, 61, 91, 92, 113, 119
Buscher, 15, 39

calcium carbonate, 128
Canova, Dominique, 12, 15, 67, 68, 88, 89, 142
casein, 84, 133, 136, 138
ceiling paintings, 15, 16, 30, 31, 37, 67, 73, 77, 88, 89, 122, 141, 142, 143, 144
choir loft, 8, 29, 34, 62, 63, 90, 95, 106, 119, 125
Church Decoration. A Manual of Appropriate Ornamentation, 42
columns
  cast iron, 34, 62, 93, 117, 125
  full and engaged, 8, 15, 29, 30, 39, 55, 58, 61, 92, 113, 124
communion rail, 24, 25, 30
Conrad Schmitt Studios, 38, 99, 102, 122, 123, 124, 133, 136
copal varnish, 135
cornice, 4, 16, 27, 30, 34, 39, 43, 52, 55, 90, 106, 113, 124, 142

dammar, 133
dichlorofluorescein (DCF), 139, 139
distemper, 84, 126, 132, 134
door surround, altar area, 39, 43, 47, 75, 102, 105, 122
Downing, A.J., 41, 42, 47, 50

Ecclesiologist, 32, 42
ethyl alcohol, 133, 134, 135
Expert Calciminer, The, 135

fluorescence, secondary, 137, 138
fluoroscein isothiocyanate (FITC), 137, 138
flurochrome, 137, 138, 139
Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR), 127, 137
fresco, 12-13, 15n, 84
Friends of St. Alphonsus, 25, 145

gilding, 55, 75, 92, 95, 122
glue, 133, 135, 137, 138
gum, plant, 133, 135, 139

Historic New Orleans Collection, 32

Irish Channel, 2, 25

Kelly, A. Ashmun, 135

Lafayette-Folger house, 77
lithopone, 129
Long, Louis L., 4, 8, 41,27, 36, 50
Long, Robert C., 4, 68
Luette, Brother Thomas, 11

magnesium, 128
main entry, 34, 63, 96, 119, 125
marbling, 69, 72, 102, 117
mastic, 133
media, paint binding, 84, 126, 133, 134, 137
methodology
  of finishes characterization, 36
  of finishes investigation, 32
methylene chloride, 133, 134, 135, 136
microscopy
  fluorescence, 36, 137-39
  normal, reflected light, 36
  SEM/EDS, 36, 127-29
Millar, William, 41, 128, 129
Myers, Catherine, 133

narthex, 29, 143
New Orleans Guide, 67
New Orleans Times, 12, 15, 88
Notre Dame de Bon Secours, 24, 25

oil-based paint, 126, 133, 136
Our Lady of Perpetual Help altar, 22, 24, 29, 87

Packard and Butler lithograph, 15, 17, 32, 50, 51, 77, 80, 89
pews, 16, 25, 30
pigment identification, 126, 128
plaster, tinted, 37, 39, 41, 42, 43, 47, 55, 65, 69, 73, 84, 126, 128, 143
Plastering. Plain and Decorative, 41, 128
protein, 133, 135, 136, 138, 139

Rauch, 18, 87
red lead (tetroxide of lead), 41, 128, 129
Redemptorist Order, 2, 3, 4, 25, 32, 68
Redemptorist Vice-Province House archives, 32
renaissance revival, 27, 37
resins
  natural, 133, 135, 137
  synthetic, 144
Reynolds, Lewis, 77
Robison, B. Warren, 27
rundbogenstil, 27

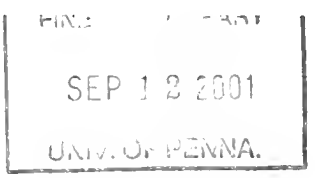
Sacred heart altar, 23
sacristy, 23, 39, 47, 69
sanctuary, 23, 24, 29, 30, 32, 34, 39, 55, 68, 73, 77, 88, 99, 122
Seventy-five Years of Service, 22
shellac, 133, 135
silica, 128
solubility tests, 133-36, 137
St. Alphonsus Church (Baltimore, Maryland), 4
St. Gerard altar, 23
St. Ignatius Church, 4, 8, 41
St. Joseph altar, 22, 29
St. Mary's Assumption Church, 1, 24
St. Patrick statue, 28
stairwells, 34, 65, 96, 120, 125
stenciling, 38, 98, 102, 105, 106, 110, 117, 119, 122, 126, 128, 129, 133, 135, 141

tetramethyl rhodamine isothiocyanate (TRITC), 138
The Architecture of Country Houses, 41, 50
The Painter, Gilder, and Varnisher's Companion, 42
titanium oxide, 129
titanium white, 129
trompe l'oeil, 4, 16, 18, 22, 30, 37, 67, 68, 69, 72, 77, 80, 84, 87, 88, 89, 98, 133, 134, 135, 138, 139, 141, 143, 149
Tulane University, 32

walls, nave, 8, 16, 34, 47, 77, 80, 105, 122, 138
water, distilled, 133, 134
Wharton, Thomas K., 11, 37
Wilson, Samuel, 18, 2n, 32, 87
windows, stained glass, 21, 30, , 50, 52, 90, 141, 142
wood graining, 47, 62, 63, 65, 93, 95, 96, 143

Zacherie, James S., 67, 91
zinc sulphide, 129

Anne & Jerome Fisher
FINE ARTS LIBRARY
University of Pennsylvania
Please return this book as soon as you have finished with it. It must be returned by the latest date stamped below.



3 1198 03059 9802
N/1198/03059/9802X

3 1198 03059 9802
N/1198/03059/9802X